THE ROLE OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN IMPROVING THE SPEAKING SKILLS OF 8TH-GRADE ESL LEARNERS: A CASE STUDY OF A PRIVATE SECTOR SCHOOL IN LAHORE

JAVERIA RANA

Registration No: 22/LCWU-455

Supervisor

Ms. Fizzah Aslam Bhinder

DEPARTMENT OF TESOL

LAHORE COLLEGE FOR WOMEN UNIVERSITY, LAHORE

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JAVERIA RANA

DEPARTMENT OF TESOL

LAHORE COLLEGE FOR WOMEN UNIVERSITY, LAHORE

2024

CERTIFICATE

This is to confirm that the research detailed in Ms. _____s thesis, which she submitted to the Department of TESOL, at Lahore College for Women University, was done under my/our direct supervision. I/We have personally reviewed the raw data and attest to the accuracy and validity of the results presented. I/We also confirm that thesis data have not been used in part or in whole in a work that has already been submitted or is in the process of being submitted in partial or total completion of any other degree from any other institution, either at home or abroad. I/We further certify that the enclosed article was created under my supervision and that I support its review for the award of a MS degree through University's official procedures.

_____

Name

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_____

Name

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_____

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Stamp

Date_____

Dedicated to

My loving parents

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

(Alphabetically arranged)

AAT:	Academic Achievement Test
AI:	Artificial Intelligence
ANCOVA:	Analysis of Covariance
BGCL:	Base Group Cooperative Learning
CHAT:	Cultural Historical Activity Theory
CL:	Cooperative Learning
CLBAF:	Cooperative Learning Behavioral Assessment Form
CLL:	Cooperative Language Learning
CLT:	Communicative Language Teaching
CLT:	Cooperative Learning Techniques
CRT:	Culturally Responsive Teaching
EAT:	English Achievement Test
ECE:	Early Childhood Education
EFL:	English as a Foreign Language
ELL:	English Language Learner
EPQR:	Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised
EPT:	English Language Proficiency Test
ESL:	English as a Second Language
FCL:	Formal Cooperative Learning
ICL:	Informal Cooperative Learning
IH:	Interaction Hypothesis

L2:	Second Language
LLOS:	Language Learning Orientations Scale
LTM:	Learning Team Model
MNC:	Multinational Corporations
NHT:	Number Heads Together
OH:	Output Hypothesis
OPT:	Oxford Placement Test
SDT:	Self Determination Theory
SPSS:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
STAD:	Students Teams Achievement Divisions
TBL:	Task Based Learning
TGT:	Teams Games Tournaments
TL:	Target Language
TPS:	Think-Pair-Share
ZPD:	Zone of Proximal Development

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of cooperative learning in improving the English speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners through a short-term case study at a private sector school in Lahore. Grounded in a pragmatic paradigm, the research employs a mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative data from a student questionnaire and qualitative insights from semi-structured teacher interviews. The sample consists of 250 ESL students and 6 English teachers. Quantitative findings indicate significant improvements in speaking skills, with 86.7% of students actively participating in discussions, 62.2% remaining engaged throughout lessons, and notable advancements in vocabulary, pronunciation, and confidence. Additionally, 85% of students report that group activities enhance their critical thinking abilities. The qualitative thematic analysis of teacher interviews corroborates these findings, emphasising the role of cooperative learning in boosting student engagement, motivation, and overcoming challenges related to vocabulary and confidence. Themes such as social interaction, peer support, and group dynamics emerged as vital components for fostering collaboration, while cognitive complexity and linguistic development were enhanced through structured cooperative tasks. Teachers highlighted the importance of their support and facilitation in managing group dynamics and addressing barriers like fluency, intonation, and linguistic complexity. The study underscores the potential of cooperative learning to holistically improve not only students' speaking proficiency but also critical thinking, confidence, and collaborative skills, making it an effective pedagogical strategy for ESL education.

Keywords: *cooperative learning, ESL learners, speaking skills, critical thinking, student engagement, vocabulary acquisition*

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and Background

Oral communication skills have always been important as they are essential to human communication, social relationships, and fundamental for the advancement of civilisation. Spoken language is one of the earliest forms of expression in any language that enables people to convey ideas, share emotions, and connect with others. Speaking has been known as the key to human interaction and cultural retention, from oral traditions in ancient societies to complex dialogues typical for contemporary civilisation (Crystal, 2012). When we communicate with people in daily life, every communication brings about new opportunities. Nowadays speaking is an essential skill because challenges of conceivable worlds are connected to academic and professional success as well as personal development; it does not only mean spouting words out everyone can speak easily but offers processes that make individuals think deeply besides verbal expression. Moreover, in a world increasingly interconnected with ideas and knowledge traded across linguistic and cultural boundaries, the capacity to articulate thoughts transversely is relevant like never before.

We see that in the language learning process, speaking is regarded as one of the essential elements related to communicative competence. Speaking mastery allows one to operate in a range of communicative contexts, be it informal conversation or public speaking; therefore leading to better social well-being and work success (Brown, 2014). When teaching ESL, especially when helping students learn English for use in their day-to-day activities it is useful to make them talk. More than a mere linguistic ability, talking is important because it cultivates empathy, cooperation, and understanding in an increasingly diverse and multicultural world.

Nowadays, with the emergence of globalisation good communication in a foreign language can make or break how well we can bridge cultural gaps and communicate internationally.

1.2 Importance of Speaking Skills in ESL Education

For ESL students, speaking is a fundamental need as it enables them to speak fluently and coherently about their ideas, feelings, or thoughts. We look at the overall competence to use the language actively and passively by looking at how well one can speak. In class when a student can speak fluently, he/she is in a better position to participate and cooperate with peers as well as join the discussions happening within the classroom or at least properly convey his/her thoughts. These skills are vital for personal, academic, and career success beyond the classroom in an increasingly interconnected world.

For ESL learners, speaking is the cornerstone of their language acquisition process. In learning and teaching English as a foreign or second language, the necessity of perception and attitude towards speaking skills in communication, and problems from different aspects on how to teach or to learn speaking skills better have crucial significance. Since speaking is linked to the development of communicative competence, it has a stronger position in learners' skills. Speaking enables learners to interact productively in everyday conversations, articulate views accurately, and take part actively in authentic interactions. Speaking skills are one of the major signposts to have an idea about how well a second/foreign language student uses words by their accuracy and fluency (Brown, 2014). In ESL learning we find issues related to anxiety, shyness, and lack of confidence and fluency that directly affect the communication in English. As a result, the integration of speaking activities within language teaching is needed to foster practical application and overall proficiency among learners.

More than this, the achievement of speaking in ESL contexts is largely responsible for ensuring learners are incorporated academically and socially. It is required not just for active classroom participation but fluent and accurate English speaking skills go a long way in improving interpersonal relations, and professional opportunities among others. Research has shown that the best students are those who can speak English fluently because they have been reading and interacting in this language for longer, naturally performing well on academic tasks as their area of expertise. They also manage to shine in job interviews and other professional contexts due to their communication skills (Richards, 2008). As a result, the development of speaking skills in ESL programs can equip learners to face academic, social, and professional challenges with ease.

Similarly, enhancing oral proficiency among ESL learners enhances active learning where the dynamics of discussion and joint work take over. Group discussions, debates, or role-plays all enhance speaking ability but in a way where students will also learn to think critically and actively listen leading them into communicative exchanges (Harmer, 2015). An interactive style is in line with the guidelines laid down by communicative language teaching (CLT), which promotes an emphasis on real-life communication and authentic language use. As speaking skills are integral to successful communication in English, they should be at the core of ESL learning to empower learners and prepare them for real-world challenges.

1.3 The Role of Speaking Skills in Language Acquisition

Since speaking is the primary mode of communication, it is frequently seen as the most important of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Speaking is a communication tool that helps students successfully convey their ideas, feelings, and thoughts.

Speaking is the main method through which individuals engage in conversation and exchange information. Speaking English effectively helps ESL students integrate into English-

speaking contexts and have better social interactions. According to Harmer (2015), speaking is an essential skill for real-life communication since it entails creating organised verbal utterances to communicate meaning.

Language skills that are both productive and receptive are combined when speaking. Speaking and writing are productive skills while listening and reading are receptive ones. While productive skills need the creation of anything like a speech, receptive skills allow pupils to receive and process information without the need to produce language (Harmer, 2015). In addition, the learner does not require the English language to communicate or exist in their current social, cultural, or linguistic setting. For the majority of individuals, speaking a language is often equated with language proficiency. However, according to Bailey and Savage (1994), speaking in a second or foreign language has often been viewed as the most demanding of the four skills. The hardest thing about spoken English is that it requires interaction with at least one other speaker. Speaking is a process that requires the integration of several subsystems, even though it is widely regarded as a fundamental ability. For language learners, speaking a second or foreign language can be quite challenging (Bailey and Savage 1994). It entails processing spoken language as well as comprehending and making speech. Because of this dual role, frequent speaking practice is essential for ESL learners to advance their abilities. According to Brown (2014), learners may communicate more effectively and meaningfully when these abilities are integrated.

Speaking practices help students improve their cognitive skills by making them reply to others, arrange their ideas, and utilise proper language and terminology. Higher-order thinking abilities of Blooms Taxonomy, including analysis, synthesis, and assessment, are developed through this cognitive engagement and are critical for success in school and beyond.

Speaking skills play a crucial role in language acquisition, serving as a bridge between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Through speaking, learners actively engage in language processing, which reinforces their understanding of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Speaking forces learners to speak quickly and in real-time, making them internalise language structures. In addition to that, spoken language is bi-directional in the sense that learners can correct themselves and refine their speech and also change quite flexibly among various communicative contexts of real-life situations. The more they can speak and communicate, the better understanding of language patterns — honing both fluency as well as accuracy.

As is the fact that speaking also allows for 'lifeworld' interactions to take place, and these are fundamental to using language in any form of real meaning. In this sense, the Vygotskian theory postulates that learning is a mediated social phenomenon in which communication has an essential function in cognitive development (Lantolf, 2000). These conversations make the learners gain linguistic competencies on the one hand, and a knowledge of culture as well as context that is necessary to communicate properly. Conversational practices such as collaborative tasks and peer interaction provide authentic use of the language, which in turn helps natural acquisition and recall over time. Speaking is therefore a dynamic activity that facilitates language acquisition rather than just a part of learning a language.

1.4 Academic Importance of Speaking Skills

Speaking skills play a key role in creating an environment of active participation, as we know that classroom communication is essential for learning to take place at an optimum level. Confidence to talk allows students to participate in discussions, ask questions, and work together when doing group projects – which are crucial for effective learning (Brown, 2014). Classroom activities often involve articulating thoughts and opinions out loud, which is

difficult to do well without adequate speaking skills. Communicative competence in classroom settings also referred to by Richards and Rodgers (2014), encompasses the other beyond linguistic competence including social competence which revolves around capacities for interaction, negotiation of meaning, and cooperation. These communications not only exclusively enhance the comprehension of coursework learning but also support critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, skills that are typically important for accomplishment in all walks of life.

In addition, speaking skills are critical to assessment and evaluation in ESL instruction. The evaluative tools that are used to evaluate the student's communicative competence such as oral examination, presentation, and discussion all require speaking skills. Speaking skills will also affect one's academic performance as the oral assessments that are performed online or in real-time, require spontaneous language use (Harmer, 2015).

Speaking is fundamental to linguistic development, particularly in mastering vocabulary and grammar through practice. These two attributes massively help learners to have context-aware use of language and thus it helps in internalising the language. The more one speaks without any hesitations regarding sentence formation/ accuracy, the better at usage they will get (Thornbury, 2005). Besides, the art of speaking is also bringing students closer to each other and boosting their confidence in school life and beyond. Knowledge of the spoken language also enables ESL learners to build relationships with both peers and faculty, which makes them feel a part of their school community which results in enhanced motivation towards learning (Nunan, 1999). The importance of speaking in educational environments is underlined by academic competency, social infrastructure, and language acquisition combined.

1.5 Challenges in Teaching Speaking Skills

Speaking is a fundamental element of communication that everyone faces the challenge to tackle. Students struggle when it comes to expressing themselves sufficiently and accurately because of limited vocabulary and challenges with grammatical structures. This constraint might result in frustration, loss of confidence, and becoming averse to speaking opportunities (Thornbury, 2005). A surprising amount of students struggle to build meaningful sentences or suffer from long pauses and reliance on basic grammatical structures. Difficulty expressing nuanced ideas may cause frustration and lead to a participatory reduction in speaking activities.

Most ESL learners find it difficult to express themselves through spoken words due to fear of making mistakes in speaking. This fear, fueled by anxiety and self-consciousness may prevent students from practicing speaking in a classroom setting (Horwitz et al., 1986). The fear is, for the most part, associated with an inhibition from peers as well as teachers rendering them too shy to speak during class activities. This fear often leads students to sit silently during speaking exercises, effectively depriving them of opportunities to practice and improve their oral production.

Another obstacle to speaking skill development in ESL contexts is the dearth of opportunities for practice. In a great number of classrooms, reading and writing are much more highly prised than speaking so the opportunities for oral practice remain scarce (Nunan, 1999). This means it limits the fluency and how spontaneous students can be in speaking. In addition, the large size of classes and teacher-centered approaches can even more discourage meaningful participation. Learners also fail to build the self-assurance needed in real-life communication because of inadequate practice. Teachers have to vary the emphasis on different language skills, including more communicative activities for students to practice speaking.

Moreover, cultural differences and personal learner characteristics affect students' willingness as well as ability to take part in speaking activities. In cultures where questioning the teacher or speaking up in class is less encouraged (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996), this has implications for how engaged students might be with spoken tasks. Also, students are extroverts and introverts; while some of them feel comfortable talking others may not (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). This diversity calls for some adaptation on the part of teachers, whose teaching strategies must vary to suit diverse learners and narrow any existing gaps in attainment that restrict inclusive engagement. Overcoming these obstacles includes acknowledging and honoring cultural and individual diversities, as well as creating an environment within the classroom that invites all learners to speak without inhibition.

1.6 Effective Methods to Enhance Speaking Skills

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is one of the most widely used methods to enhance speaking skills in ESL learners. In CLT, the emphasis is on meaningful interaction and communication as essential for language learning. This method forces the students to use language functionally in varied contexts, they are required to do many real-life communicative activities such as role-plays or simulations; most of the time students need to practice examples through interviews and group discussions (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). CLT focuses on genuine communication and fluency which leads to building confidence and other useful skills & abilities that make a student perfect in coping with reality. In addition to CLT, Task-Based Learning (TBL) is also an effective technique where students complete tasks that put them in control of using the language. For task-based learning, problem-solving tasks, simulations, or project-based exercises are used, to create a real context in which learners can use their speaking skills (Willis, 1996).

Role Plays and Simulations are also excellent for improving speaking skills, as they help students to create situations in which the language is practiced most freely (and allow them to adapt their communication depending on the culture). This leads to a more fluid and spontaneous conversational style and strengthens the negotiation of meaning and specific social styles appropriate in varied situations (Ladousse, 1987). Similarly, cooperative learning approaches such as Think-Pair-Share and Jigsaw also help to foster a supportive atmosphere where students can speak confidently without the fear of being judged (Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1994). Through these shared activities, learners interact with their peers and have more chances to talk out loud — which in turn increases confidence and improves communication.

The inclusion of technology into ESL instruction will also facilitate speaking development since it provides some different platforms and tools to acquire a language. Language learning apps, online discussion forums as well as video conferencing tools provide students with additional opportunities to practice speaking (and sometimes even interacting with native speakers) (Chapelle, 2003). Tandem and HelloTalk are effective platforms to find global language exchange partners, where one can communicate in the target language. In addition, interactive and engaging activities, debates, storytelling, and language games introduce an element of fun to speaking practice that gives students motivation—something they might be lacking at times in this process. Last but not least, feedback and assessment play a vital role in this process whereby constructive feedback from peers, teachers, and self-assessment enables learners to see their strengths and weaknesses which allows them to reflect and improve (Brown, 2004). Diverse approaches allow valuable options for teachers to create an environment that helps students develop their speaking skills interactively and progressively.

Cooperative learning is one pedagogical approach that has demonstrated potential in improving language proficiency. Students work together with each other in small groups, they support each other, and they have common objectives, which leads to more confidence, engagement, and dialogue. There is shared responsibility and teamwork is given importance. This engaging and encouraging environment develops the potential to improve the speaking skills of ESL learners.

1.7 The Concept of Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is a teaching strategy that involves students working together, which teaches them to take joint responsibility for academic success and improves the social behavior of students. It is a distinct perspective from other traditional approaches where there is a sense of competition and individual success. Based on social interdependence theory, this approach posits that students learn more effectively when collaborating to achieve both collective and individual goals. Similar to the constructivist notion that knowledge is built through community interaction and collaboration (Vygotsky, 1978), cooperative learning emphasises group cooperation and mutual assistance. Educational research by Johnson & Jonson (1999), as well as more scholarship on the effects of learning, found that cooperative educational practices not only build academic success but also enhance one's character through socially and emotionally based skills such as empathy, understanding different perspectives in relationships along with ethical community building.

Cooperative learning can find its origins in the theories of social psychologists Kurt Lewin and Morton Deutsch. Kurt Lewin's field theory presented in 1935, established the basis for social interdependence; where group dynamics are a potent motivator of individual behavior. Morton Deutsch (1949)—who built upon Lewin’s work—extended this idea to one of positive interdependence, wherein each member's success is contingent on group members

succeeding. In the years that followed, David and Roger Johnson emerged as key proponents of cooperative learning in educational settings (Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1994), adapting these theories into principles for successful implementation. Quality learning, the kind that leads to better academic achievement than competitive or individualistic methods of working relationships is important since learning occurs through shared efforts.

Cooperative learning principles are aimed at making group work functional and equitable. A positive interdependence in cooperative learning is a prerequisite to an effective group because it establishes a sense of shared responsibility for all and acknowledges that the success or failure of one individual student represents accomplishment or loss by every other member as well. Accountability — each group member must have an individual accountability for contributing; preventing social loafing and unequal contribution across all members. Promotive interaction also involves face-to-face communication and the exchange of ideas, along with interpersonal/small group skills (e.g., communication) conflict resolution, and leadership to foster productive teamwork. Finally, the last component is group processing which entails assessing how well a team performed and assisting students in recognizing successful practices from less effective elements to better their collaboration skills by improving future social learning (Johnson et al., 1994). These principles create a framework for learning that allows both the academic and social realms, to strike a balance between systematic delivery of content while allowing learners to explore other interests.

1.8 Benefits of Cooperative Learning In ESL Context

Cooperative learning offers several significant benefits for ESL students, particularly in the development of speaking skills.

Cooperative learning gives ESL students an advantage that helps them develop speaking skills in numerous ways. One big advantage is that it creates a low-anxiety environment for students to practise speaking without the fear of judgement or failure. Studies show that when risk-taking parties work in small groups and use experimental language to describe their ideas, the atmosphere which becomes a positive one helps learners feel more comfortable with making mistakes or trying new expressions (Yahaya et al., 2021; Paneerselvam & Mohamad, 2019). Such a supportive environment is crucial for language learning, as anxiety and self-consciousness often hinder students' willingness to participate in speaking activities. This low-pressure environment permits more natural language practice and development than traditional speaking exercises that require the participation of the whole class.

Additionally, cooperative learning promotes more student-student interaction and communication which is needed to promote fluency and confidence in using language. Group discussions, role plays and problem-solving tasks thoroughly provide a consistent opportunity to speak and listen. Such an ongoing exchange not only aids in fluency development but also strengthens communicative competence through the students having to negotiate meaning, rectify misunderstandings, and enact different linguistic functions in real-time (Muniandy & Selvanathan, 2024). Furthermore, cooperative learning promotes peer feedback and correction which gives learners immediate feedback. As Kaur (2022), notes that language acquisition can benefit from peer support as feedback is immediate and done in a friendly context allowing them to internalise correct forms and expressions through reinforcement or correction.

In addition to promoting peer feedback, cooperative learning incorporates different needs and styles of learning, proposing a cross-training with the addition of at least two perspectives (students) possibly relating to a situation in methods that are relevant to them. It

allows students to leverage the strengths of their peers, which contributes to a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of language (Sirisrimangkorn, 2021). Such variety in learning interactions means that cooperative activities can benefit all students, however, they learn best. Moreover, this methodology assists in developing social and communication skills which are essential not only for language learning but also in broader contexts.

Collaborative learning develops skills for teamwork, conflict resolution, and supporting peers, all of which contribute to success in academia and beyond (Fisal & Said, 2023). Such interactive exercises enhance not only the proficiency in the language but also get students ready for real-life communicative situations.

In addition, cooperative learning also promotes higher-order thinking skills and learner autonomy in the ESL classroom. Through group and solution-based discussions, students can use the language in a more practical form but also have to do higher-order thinking when using English to analyse, critique & evaluate which is essential for success in academia (Brown 2004; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Furthermore, this method promotes self-directed learning since students own their educational process; determine what to do, and delegate roles according to each student's strengths and interests. The belief that learners are active agents in their learning is also reflected in the tenets of constructivism (Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Vygotsky, 1978), which implies advantages and considerable value to a cooperative approach to language acquisition. Working collaboratively on tasks builds resilience among students as they learn to deal with challenges and setbacks within the group, continuing their journey towards achieving responsibility for language acquisition and building confidence in its use.

1.9 Cooperative Learning: A Focused Approach

Cooperative learning can also be seen as a focused approach in ESL that regards spoken proficiency as an essential skill and concentrates on harnessing collaborative processes. The seminar-based pedagogy is based on social constructivist theorists who argue that learning and thinking are fundamentally social activities. This perspective stems from Vygotsky's (1978) seminal work on the interactionist role of collaboration in achieving more sophisticated cognitive outputs. Vygotsky's ZPD zones of proximal development that is, learners' route to higher levels of thinking, provide some insight into what cooperative activity might deliver; namely, help from others in learning. This is applied in practice with cooperative learning, where students work together to solve problems and complete tasks directed towards common goals allowing for more meaningful engagement and retention of the language (Vygotsky, 1978).

Cooperative learning in the classroom is implemented through a series of structured activities that are intended to keep engagement and participation from students at a higher level. Common methods include "Think-Pair-Share", "Jigsaw" and "Group Discussions". For instance, in a Jigsaw activity, each student becomes an "expert" on one part of the topic and then shares their expertise so that every group member can learn from everybody else (Kagan, 1994). These methods promote engagement and also give learners opportunities to speak in a group environment. Activities that promote engagement in students are instrumental in a participative classroom environment.

Cooperative learning for speaking skills creates an environment that allows students to speak without the fear of being assessed negatively. Frequent and meaningful practice (Slavin, 1995) is a foundation of the approach as well; tasks work on building collaboration where students can earn confidence from each other by practicing pronunciation along with weak

areas in their language. The focus on genuine conversation and real-life scenarios helps ensure that language skills are retained and used more often. A huge number of empirical studies have shown that cooperative learning can be effective, it has been found that students who work collaboratively are less likely to shy away from speaking and making errors, and exhibit notable improvements in their language abilities (Gillies, 2006).

In addition to language learning, cooperative work promotes social and emotional development. Group work requires communication, conflict resolution, and shared problem-solving which are critical for all interpersonal interactions in and out of the classroom (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). They learn to manage group dynamics, balance differences and support one another in their learning—and this builds social competence as well as emotional resilience. Such competencies not only improve their academic outcome but also develop them as an effective collaborator in various social and occupational contexts (Fisal & Said, 2023).

Moreover, cooperative learning is supportive of ESL students as it helps develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Group work also requires students to interpret, discuss, and produce information with others—asking them to process this information at a deeper cognitive level (Dillenbourg, 1999). Such tasks force students into analytical and persuasive use of language, consolidating their ability to express complex ideas and arguments. Cooperative learning activities (ex: group projects, and collaborative problem-solving) require higher-order thinking and a deeper knowledge of English language structures and uses. These activities also enhance critical thinking and decision-making skills that are important for academic success (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Webb, 2009).

In other words, cooperative learning serves to connect students' social and academic experiences by bringing language into context. Engaging learners in real circumstances with language makes it more meaningful and useful (Dooly, 2008). For example, collaborative tasks

often involve role-playing and simulations that mimic real-life situations, providing students with contextualised language practice. Such experiences make students aware of the possibility to use their language skills for practical tasks, and thus enhance student motivation or engagement in learning (Littlewood, 2004). Moreover, the cooperative learning environment exposes learners to different linguistic and cultural environments through interactions with peers (Skehan, 1998), thus helping them refine their understanding of as well as usage of language. This approach not only supports language acquisition but also prepares students for effective communication in a global context.

1.10 Challenges and Considerations for Using Cooperative Learning

Implementing cooperative learning in the ESL classroom can be a challenge for educators who want to ensure it is implemented effectively and beneficially. A key challenge is for the cooperative tasks to be carefully organised to promote engagement among all students while also not relying too heavily on the participation of a few. With the great majority of group work, if it is not strategically structured, then a particular student may dominate and have louder voices heard over others whose perspectives are at least as valid in less vocal ways (Gillespie & Seifert, 2019). To overcome this, teachers need to design tasks that both promote equal participation but also have specific roles and responsibilities assigned within the groups. This procedure aids in guaranteeing that every student is given the chance to engage and contribute, thus increasing participation by all members (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

Another challenge is the varying levels of language proficiency, which often makes communication and teamwork difficult. Variability in language skills can impact comprehension of instructions, participation in discussion, and collaboration on tasks. Teachers need to differentiate, using scaffolding and pairing students with complementary levels of skill to combat this (Rahimi & Fathi, 2022). Also, the differences in culture among students can

influence collaboration and group dynamics. Different group behaviours and communication styles require teachers to respond in a culturally responsive way. These challenges can however be overcome by fostering an inclusive atmosphere where diverse views are respected and cooperation is considered a prerequisite for effective learning (Bakar et al., 2013; Dooly, 2008). By honouring the complexities outlined here, educators can leverage collaborative learning to harness its power for ESL learners.

Additionally, cooperative learning in ESL settings requires teachers to monitor the dynamics of small groups and resolve any conflicts that may arise while students are working together collaboratively. Differences in opinions, work styles, or misunderstandings can cause conflicts which may hinder the learning process and disrupt group cohesion (Gillies, 2006). Learning environments are social arenas, and teachers need to facilitate group interactions, mediate disputes, and guide students toward positive conflict management practices. Conflict resolution and group dynamics training can support students in resolving disagreements, thus supporting positive collaborative environments (Slavin, 1995).

Moreover, students' individual levels of motivation and engagement can also vary within cooperative learning. This can affect the balance of collective effort among group members in cooperative learning (Kaur, 2022), as students with low motivation may hesitate to participate or provide input. To boost motivation, strategies such as establishing explicit and appropriate goals so that the students know what is expected of them, providing constant feedback on student performance (Muniandy & Selvanathan, 2024); creating a favourable learning environment to facilitate engagement are steps that teachers must take. The identification and remediation of motivational impediments are essential in allowing every student to benefit from cooperative learning experiences.

1.11 Problem Statement

English speaking skills are vital for ESL (English as a Second Language) learners to navigate both academic and social spheres with confidence. In the Pakistani context, students frequently encounter significant challenges in developing speaking proficiency, mainly because of limited exposure, inadequate practice opportunities, and the prevailing use of traditional teaching methodologies. The traditional methods are based on rote learning, memorisation, and individual work. These methods do not help to create a positive atmosphere and encourage students to speak; they offer few opportunities for practicing spoken language. It is important to note here that there are several linguistic challenges middle-school students in Pakistan encounter. There has been a lot of emphasis on speaking abilities for communication competence and academic performance but students experience issues like restricted lexical resources, lack of practice, fear of speaking errors, and lack of better training strategies. Most of these challenges create low self-esteem among the students and they do not participate in speaking activities which also do not enhance their language skills. It has been shown to negatively impact their learning of the English language and averts improvement in their overall English skills. Cooperative learning is a learning technique that focuses on the ability of the learners to learn effectively as they learn in groups and this technique can overcome these challenges and barriers. Although cooperative learning has the potential, research regarding its efficacy, and its results is scarce concerning the grade 8 ESL learners in Pakistan. It means that it is high time to investigate the contribution of cooperative learning to the enhancement of the speaking performance of 8th-grade ESL students. There was a need to know how cooperative learning impacts the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners, the challenges faced by the ESL learners, and the contribution of teachers in organising the cooperative learning environment.

1.12 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to learn about how cooperative learning contributed to improving the English speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners and using these data as a basis, analyse if cooperative learning is effective based on the perspective of both teachers and students. In addition, this study also identifies the obstacles that 8th-grade ESL students have to deal with in learning speaking skills. The present study aimed to evaluate the cooperative learning strategies on the students' verbal communication skills and to describe and analyse how cooperative learning has benefited the students in speaking.

Furthermore, the research study aims at establishing the specific role of teachers in establishing and fostering a collaborative learning environment as well as determining the key strategies that enhance the student's active participation in group activities. By identifying diverse concerns that learners in these cooperative settings encounter, the study provides an understanding of the potential barriers to their learning, which enables stakeholders to provide well-informed remedies in teaching and policy-making. This research also seeks to examine the role of teachers in creating, supporting, and facilitating cooperative learning activities to improve the speaking skills of middle school students.

In addition, the study has the objective of developing and offering practicable recommendations for educators and policymakers to apply for classroom practices and educational policies, respectively to align with the existing ESL context in middle school in Pakistan. It will help educators to come up with informed decisions that will improve instruction achievements while policymakers will come up with policies that will help ESL learners get the best environment for learning and teaching. In the end, this study attempts to provide useful insights into the existing body of literature and the policy/ practice recommendations to educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers for designing a better environment to enhance the speaking skills of ESL middle school children.

1.13 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research were:

- To evaluate the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in enhancing the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners.
- To identify the specific challenges 8th-grade ESL learners face in developing their speaking skills in a cooperative learning environment.
- To examine the role of teachers in facilitating cooperative learning activities and enhancing the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners.

1.14 Research Questions

This research explored the following questions:

1. To what extent do cooperative learning strategies improve the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners?

2. What challenges do 8th-grade ESL learners encounter in improving their speaking skills within a cooperative learning environment?

3. What is the role of teachers in planning and conducting the cooperative learning activities that influence the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners?

1.15 Significance of the Study

The study holds significance as it has implications for different stakeholders and it elucidates how the application of cooperative learning strategies can meaningfully boost the speaking proficiency of 8th-grade ESL learners. The research presents findings of the impacts of these strategies that enable the teachers to apply improvements to their practices. This, in turn, can enhance the student’s ability to speak proficiently. Proficiency in speaking is important for their performance in school and second language acquisition. Knowledge of the

specific difficulties of middle school ESL learners, including language barriers and differences in learning abilities, allows for designing appropriate instruction that addresses these difficulties effectively as a form of producing effective and relevant teaching methodologies.

Furthermore, this investigation enhances evidence-based practice with the actual empirical findings and detailed analysis of the effectiveness of cooperative learning on speaking skills hence enhancing its validity as a successful instructional strategy. It is very helpful for educators who aim to establish or improve strategies for creating cooperative groups to work in the classroom. Since the study operates in the context of a private sector school in Lahore, the research conducted during the study is contextually relevant and will provide the best solutions and recommendations. It is important when it comes to applying large-scale educational initiatives within the context of middle school ESL learners in the Pakistani culture and education context.

Last but not least, this research can provide a foundation for insight into educational policy and curriculum formulation. It can help the policymakers and educational administrators, to be aware of the benefits that can be derived from using cooperative learning as part of the overall education system. Therefore, the study extends constructive action to policies that enhance the curricula of schools helping to facilitate a better method for ESL education. In conclusion, this research contributes significantly to the present and emerging literature, fills the existing gaps, and opens up prospects to improve the learning process of the English language at the middle school level in Pakistan by enabling students to acquire speaking skills through cooperative learning, which are requisite for their further academic as well as career life.

1.16 Structure of the Study

The study is divided into five chapters with each chapter bearing a specific purpose in the overall objective of the study; which is to determine the role of cooperative learning in improving the speaking skills of the 8th-grade ESL learners.

The first chapter creates the background to the study by presenting an introduction to the subject. This entails general information and an overview of the learning of the English language along with its importance, particularly in the aspect of speaking to learn a language. It also outlines several language learning strategies and gives a detailed discussion of cooperative learning; thus, grounding the research.

In the second chapter author provides a thorough literature review, by reviewing; all the related literature to the study. It follows up on studies that have already been done in cooperative learning and aligns them to theories related to cooperative learning and ESL learners' speaking skills. In this chapter, the author has reviewed the current literature and highlights the potential research gaps that would help in establishing the contextual relevance of the study.

The third chapter outlines the research design and research method used in the study. It introduces data gathering employing both quantitative and qualitative research techniques and gives a detailed description of data triangulation. The rationale for the selected research methods, and how the data was collected and analysed to guarantee methodological soundness and credibility is justified in the methodology chapter.

Chapter four specifically delves into the research findings, presentation, and analysis of the data. It provides an analysis of the findings obtained from the data collected and gives emphasis on patterns, trends, and the emergence of themes. This chapter seeks to analyse and

explain the findings in the context of the research questions and the theoretical framework to give a detailed account of how cooperative learning influences the speaking skills of students.

The last chapter five therefore summarises the study's conclusions, a detailed discussion, and presents research implications. It also generates conclusions according to the outcomes of the study and listing of suggestions for curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers. To help educators make informed decisions based on their classroom experiences, this chapter provides both ideas and suggestions for improvements in ESL instruction and cooperative learning methods.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the crucial interaction between English language speaking proficiency and collaborative learning, involving not only global but also local perspectives. The world is becoming a global village, and English has become essential in educational, professional, and social endeavors. In particular, English plays a critical role in Pakistan's educational and professional spheres. The discussion starts with the importance of English in the 21st century across the globe and then shifts focus to its significance in Pakistan.

The chapter analyses the complex interplay of speaking with listening, reading, and writing as language skill components, and emphasizes a skills-integrated approach to language learning. Furthermore, it attempts to address cooperative learning (CL) as a powerful pedagogical approach to teaching oral communication skills. Cooperative learning has been supported through a number of different theoretical frameworks, i.e., Vygotsky (constructivism and social interaction learning theory) that help to understand why using such structures in classrooms is likely to enhance increased student engagement, participation, and language acquisition.

An examination of the origins, evolution, definitions, and major types of cooperative learning is highlighted with its relevance to modern language education. It sheds light on teachers' and students' roles within CL frameworks and how these dynamics enhance language development. It further discusses the constraints related to integrating cooperative learning strategies with oral skills training, and uses prior research, to provide evidence of its efficacy while enumerating likely challenges in various educational settings.

This chapter reviews an array of scholarly articles on what is known about the effect cooperative learning has on speaking skills and synthesises evidence from previous studies to fill gaps in existing knowledge and identify areas for future research. This examination synthesises the available literature on cooperative learning and oral skills, laying the foundation for how these strategies could improve the speaking proficiency of 8th-grade ESL learners in Pakistan.

2.2 The Global Significance of English Speaking Skills in the 21st Century

English is considered an interconnected language in today's world; we read the news, watch movies, and follow trends from all around the globe using English. In this globalised and modern era, English has become a vital key to success at the international level as it is an essential language in the business industry, diplomacy, and for educational purposes. More than 1.5 billion people speak English around the world for international communication (Crystal, 2012). The ubiquity in global affairs has rendered English an invaluable tool for anyone entering the global marketplace. Proficiency in English pays off; a recent study by the British Council has shown that proficiency in English leads to higher incomes and better job opportunities among non-English speaking countries (British Council, 2013). In addition to career benefits, English plays a vital role in academic success and international mobility. The economic advantage of English extends further than individual benefit, to what EF refers to as the aggregate global economy – countries with higher English proficiency are likely more economically competitive and innovative (Education First, 2019).

The role of English extends beyond economic advantages, influencing academic mobility and access to higher education. English is the language of instruction at many top universities, as well as a large part of published academic literature. The number of international student openings in English-speaking countries gradually increased over the

years, according to a report by the Institute of International Education (2020), led primarily by popular destinations such as the United States, Canada, and Australia. This has implications for tertiary education and is an example of why having English language skills opens up opportunities to pursue higher education elsewhere.

In this digital age, however, the value of English speaking will continue to provide a competitive advantage. The internet serves as a massive medium for information, entertainment, and communication. English dominates much of this content online, playing a key role in the digital age. Prior research, by W3Techs (2021) also found that there are more English language sites on the web than any other: about 60%. This means that people who can speak English well have a massive edge to both consume and contribute to this large digital ecosystem.

On the job front, knowing how to speak fluent English is a crucial requirement for many— right from landing the first project (which might be an international one) in college or university to multinationals and finally global organisations. While most, a survey conducted by Cambridge English revealed that 95% of employers in non-English speaking countries found English language skills useful for their organisation (Cambridge English, 2016). Moreover, this need for English language skills applies to practically any industry including technology and finance even in relatively low-skilled manpower such as hospitality or health care.

In addition, English is a major gateway to understanding each other and different continents. The British linguist, David Crystal (2012), argues that English has come to function as a lingua franca between people with different first languages becoming a medium of international co-operation and diplomacy. English is also the primary language for tourism, and this sector brings in considerable revenue to several national economies. As reported by

the World Tourism Organization, in 2019 international tourist arrivals reached a staggering 1.5 billion and quite naturally most of these tourists speak English as their first or second language (UNWTO, 2020). Among the many strategies that nations use to leverage tourism for growth, creating a strong ratio of English-speaking labour force is highly likely.

There is no doubt that the 21st century needs one to have good English-speaking skills. English proficiency opens the doors to many opportunities all over the world, in terms of economic advancement and educational achievement; cultural exchange, and digital literacy. As our world grows increasingly interdependent, proficiency in English will continue to be an asset for individuals and societies.

The importance of English speaking skills in many different fields on an international level means that these are crucial skills for ESL learners and this is where cooperative learning comes into play. Kagan (1994) posits that ESL students develop better communication and interaction skills if they are proficient in English, to engage more effectively in a collaborative educational setting. During cooperative learning activities, learners not only enhance their speaking competencies but also develop critical thinking and social interaction skills, which are necessary in a globalized society (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). In addition, as English remains the lingua franca in global discourse, a potential competency for ESL learners to be at an advantage in accessing scholarly achievements and employment networks across countries due to their proficient speaking skills (Crystal 2012). Dornyei (2001), has indicated that the integration of cooperative learning strategies in ESL instruction can greatly improve learners' speaking ability and equip them with various skills necessary for the globalized world.

2.3 The Crucial Role of English-Speaking Skills in Pakistan

English is an indispensable skill, especially in countries like Pakistan, where it serves as a lingua franca in professional and academic domains. English Speaking skills are crucial in

Pakistan as they determine the opportunities for an individual and success at national and international level. English has been deeply embedded in Pakistan's linguistic landscape, influenced by its colonial past and the country's strategic geopolitical position. English is the official language of the country and is spoken in power domains like government, judiciary, military, higher learning institutions including media (Shamim, 2011). The total preponderance of English in key sectors signifies its huge significance and the requirement for skilled language speakers.

The importance of English in the field of education is great for students who aspire to join top educational institutions, proficiency in English is regarded as an asset. Pakistani students with good English communication skills have a competitive advantage in getting higher education within Pakistan and in foreign countries. Rahman (2015) has identified English medium education as a means of securing good jobs and social/economic progress in Pakistan. This perception has increased the demand for English medium schools and courses across the country, underlining a societal recognition of English language skills as a passport to quality education or well-paid job prospects.

The importance of English speaking skills in Pakistan is witnessed due to the dire need for effective communication within different professional and academic spheres. For instance, English proficiency plays an important role in facilitating both educational and employment opportunities, especially in the formal sector (Rahman, 2015). This further underscores the role of English in enhancing access to higher education, both domestically and internationally. Addressing this demand, however, necessitates sound pedagogical strategies that can help learners acquire these language skills. Concerning promoting English speaking skills in the classroom, cooperative learning strategies provide an environment that can immensely support improvement in speaking skills. The strategies promote student engagement and the practice

of real-life discourse contexts, which in turn supports speaking skills development outcomes as it allows the students to foster an interactive and collaborative environment (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Moreover, cooperative learning also has the benefits of not only facilitating language skills but is also conducive to abilities needed in teamwork, problem-solving, and cultural exchange (Kagan, 1994). Therefore, bringing cooperative learning models in ESL contexts can resolve the very issue of the gap between English proficiency needs and pedagogical practices responsible for language learning.

Beyond the realm of education, English speaking skills have become critical in the professional world, as proficiency in English is often a prerequisite for career advancement. The Euromonitor International (2010), study adds evidence to the general perception among those in power and others in society that English language competency is an important base condition for securing employment within Pakistan's formal sector. The demand is from all sectors like IT, finance, hospitality, and MNCs as the English language remains the main means of communication for business.

In addition, English proficiency is also vital for Pakistan to compete in the international knowledge economy. According to Mansoor (2005), as access to cutting-edge research and technology is largely in English, it has become important for the community of scientists/academicians within Pakistan must be proficient in the language. Moreover, due to this availability of global knowledge banks almost all professionals and researchers from Pakistan can take part in the world´s conversation, co-working on projects at the edges which consequently boosts intellectual capital generation along with research production literacy.

For an interaction of Pakistan with the world as a normal state in terms of international relations and diplomacy, proficiency in English is essential. It is a powerful tool for international organization, diplomacy, and cross-cultural business. According to Haque (2017),

Pakistan's capability to put across its stance on the international sphere of events and cultivate contacts with the world is hugely augmented by the effectiveness of its diplomats/representatives who are conversant in English. This language skill is very important for the advancement of the country and the preservation of its national interests at the international level.

In addition to professional and educational contexts, English proficiency is essential in the growing tourism sector, as it enhances Pakistan's ability to attract international visitors. Tourism industry employees with strong English language skills are better positioned to capitalize on customer interactions and collaboration opportunities. Since the country is making a push to increase its tourism and attract international visitors, English language ability similarly becomes more important. Alam et al. (2019), assert that drawing inspiration from the example of the hospitality industry and polishing their English-speaking abilities can play an instrumental role in unlocking tourism prospects, especially for Pakistan turning them into economic engines.

To sum it up, the role of English-spoken skills in Pakistan is diverse and wider. English widens the horizon to boost growth from schools, colleges, jobs, and business amongst other crucial factors of international diplomacy to opening doors for better opportunities both at the personal level and national perspective. While Pakistan actively engages on the global stage, the development of English-speaking skills among its population remains a persistent challenge. Pakistan must harness these opportunities by investing in the teaching of English and the promotion of bilingualism to give its citizens a chance for success, thus enhancing Pakistan’s competitiveness amid the integrated world of the 21st century.

2.4 Relationship between speaking and other skills

The interaction between speaking and the other three language skills (listening, reading, and writing), however, is complex, intertwined with each skill supporting the others. All four build on each other to ensure a well-rounded foundation for effective communication and language ability. Educators and learners alike need solid language skills to understand those connections.

2.4.1 Speaking and listening

Speaking is a two-way and interactive exchange of spoken or signed language, between two or more people through the fundamental elements of speaking and listening. Talking is similar to active listening because successful communication (like speaking) requires a speaker who can respond and produce verbal output. Brown and Yule (1983) also emphasise that good communicators are careful to listen attentively before producing a response so promptness is dependent on how well listeners have grasped the nuances of meaning. Exposure to native speakers helps with correct pronunciation, intonation, and speech patterns required for accuracy in speaking (Rost, 2013). Listening, too, enhances vocabulary and grammar as learners encounter new lexical items and syntactic structures in authentic contexts. This in turn contributes to ensuring that learners incorporate these aspects into their spoken output, thus improving fluency and accuracy overall.

2.4.2 Speaking and reading

The relationship between speaking and reading is equally instrumental as reading plays a vital role in enhancing our speaking skills. Reading not only helps to increase vocabulary but also familiarises learners with a wide range of sentence structures and patterns in the discourse which contribute significantly to improved fluency. According to Nation (2009), the vocabulary and syntactic knowledge from reading will be transferred over directly into

speaking leading speakers to produce more orderly verbal expression. Speaking and reading, together with activities while learning also have a strong cognitive factor, such as prediction, inference, or summarisation. It is the ability to obtain context clues with reading aids in predicting meanings and then generating output appropriate responses during speaking (Grabe, 2009). This commonality of thinking can be used to help learners transfer the skills they have learned in one modality to another, ultimately empowering them with tools for effective written and oral communication.

2.4.3 Speaking and writing

Speaking and writing share similarities in structure and expression but differ in their modes of execution. Teaching involves instructing students on how to clearly order their thoughts, use appropriate language, and adhere to grammatical norms. It has been suggested that proficient writing can be a major factor contributing to good speaking as the ability to generate thoughts may improve significantly, as proficiency in writing often provides a more important and immediate foundation for expressing thoughts compared to oral language processes (Harmer, 2015). The spontaneity of speaking is, however, very different from the rewordable nature of written language. Speaking is interactive with direct feedback and reactive behavior, whereas writing facilitates more thorough planning and self-reflection (Hedge, 2005). Still, writing is a practice in solidifying more organised thoughts and communicating them briefly, which can result in the written word improving verbal clarity as well.

2.4.4 Speaking and pronunciation

Pronunciation plays a critical role in speaking, as clear and accurate pronunciation is essential for effective communication. It encompasses the correct articulation of sounds, stress, rhythm, and intonation. Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (2010) argue that proficient

pronunciation ensures that a speaker's message is understood by the listener, highlighting the direct correlation between pronunciation and speaking effectiveness. Activities such as practicing tongue twisters specifically target the improvement of pronunciation and fluency, thereby enhancing overall speaking competence. Accurate pronunciation facilitates clearer communication, which is crucial for successful interaction in both academic and social contexts. Clear pronunciation not only aids in conveying complex ideas effectively in academic settings but also fosters mutual understanding and rapport in social interactions, thereby enhancing the speaker's overall communicative competence.

2.4.5 Integrated skills approach

Practicing speaking alongside other language skills of listening, reading, and writing over an extended period promotes holistic language development. Richards and Renandya (2002), suggest that incorporating these skills reflects the use of real-life communication situations in which many abilities are used at the same time. Such an integrated approach improves overall language proficiency and reflects the interconnected nature of communication. As a pedagogical approach, this is highly significant; teachers should create activities that use more than one skill to give learners chances to develop their language skills in an integrated way. Therefore, the speaking skill is frequently combined with other skills in task-based learning (TBL) experiences, to produce meaningful results (Willis, 1996). This type of integration helps create well-rounded and efficient communication skills, a crucial ability for real-world interactions.

To summarise, speaking has a symbiotic and beneficial relationship with other language skills. Listening (comprehension and pronunciation), reading (vocabulary, grammar), and writing (coherence). Taking an integrated approach to teaching these skills allows for a holistic perspective on language use, recognising that communication is always contextualised.

2.5 Importance of Cooperative Learning.

Cooperative learning has developed into a significant pedagogical strategy in language teaching, mainly as it promotes cooperation and participation resulting in higher academic performance. Social constructivist in its roots (Vygotsky, 1978), cooperative learning promotes peer interactions and group processes as essential to the construction of knowledge. This theory posits that students learn language more efficiently when they work to solve problems collaboratively, providing a particularly useful context, for the use of cooperative learning in ESL. Another major benefit of cooperative learning is its use to instill self-confidence in ESL learners. Self-assurance has always been one of the most important attitudes in language learning (Tracy, 2004; Burns, 1999), as it releases learners from fear and helps them to be more spontaneous when doing communicative tasks. When students, in pairs or larger groups, learn together in a cooperative learning environment where there are strong and genuine interactions with peers the anxiety of committing mistakes is eliminated. Such support is social—social factors are less anxiety-provoking and motivate students to participate which contributes to speaking proficiency and fluency.

In addition to fostering self-confidence, cooperative learning enhances students' communication abilities. Cooperative learning helps to learn and be better at communication skills. ESL learners are required to work together with other ESL students for them to complete tasks. This makes a way to improve not only their vocabulary but also their communication skills as they have to engage in teamwork and use effective communication. Johnson and Johnson (1999), argue that cooperative learning is most effective in settings where traditional pedagogy struggles to engage the learners, but this approach has been successfully implemented universally for ESL. Collaborative learning means students are also accountable to their peers, fostering a sense of responsibility and increasing motivation.

Moreover, cooperative learning plays a role in improving the self-esteem and task persistence of learners. Cohen & Garcia (2007), note that meaningfully contributing to tasks in collaboration is seen by students as a step forward in building their sense of belonging and capability which, eventually leads them towards gaining some self-esteem. This positive self-image creates a lasting commitment to activities and resilience in learning. Furthermore, according to Felder (2004), the peer feedback process also serves as a mechanism for language proficiency by promoting teamwork and helping to improve both written and spoken skills.

Also, while in a cooperative learning setting students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students are presented with a problem, that requires analysis of information and options, and groups must come to an agreement that enhances cognition (Smaldino & Richards, 2002). Additionally, the interactive nature of these activities helps increase language use in real-life situations which is crucial for developing authentic literacy skills (Erben & Pulay, 2010).

Cooperative learning has the aspect of encouraging cross-cultural awareness and knowledge. ESL classrooms usually include students from different cultural backgrounds and cooperative learning activities can offer valuable intercultural exchanges. These exchanges and sharing of diverse experiences help promote respect for different viewpoints (Malik & Shoaib, 2007). In addition, the approach helps to foster metacognitive skills where students reflect on how they learn best and become intrinsic self-regulated learners (King & Newmann, 1999).

To sum up, cooperative learning is a flexible and effective method to improve the speaking of ESL learners. It tackles numerous language learning difficulties while also providing the tools students need for both academic and social success by utilising empowerment activities such as collaboration, confidence-building exercises, and deliberate communication plans.

2.6 Cooperative Learning: Origin, Evolution, and Theoretical Framework

Cooperative learning developed from the works of early educational philosophers and psychologists who understood that social interchanges were fundamental to intellectual as well as emotional growth. Progressive thinkers, including John Dewey, encouraged an emphasis on experiential learning over rote content acquisition, advocating for place-based education where cooperative work and collaboration are integral to the learning process. According to Dewey (1938), students grow where education is based on the lived experiences and educational environment that encourages cooperation work, and collaboration between groups. Kurt Lewin's work in social psychology and group dynamics, for example, was formative of a still-growing understanding of how cooperative processes can influence intergroup relations and problem-solving. The study of group dynamics, types such as that defined by Lewin (1947), explored many associated matters concerning groups including even those related to cooperative learning categories like the concept of group cohesion and the effectiveness of collaborative efforts.

The major theoretical context of cooperative learning is deeply rooted in several important conceptual frameworks, and social interdependence theory is central to it. Social interdependence theory, developed by Morton Deutsch in the 1940s and later expanded upon by David Johnson, Roger Johnson proposes that cooperative behaviour results from individuals perceiving their own group’s outcomes (reward or punishment) as tied to those of a counterpart group. Cooperative learning (CL) is a form of active learning in which students work together to solve problems that are structured from the beginning, emphasising both individual and collective learning; and one component positive interdependence exists once group members understand their success depends upon others' successes. It places strong responsibility on the individual and gives attention to an interaction that is promotive as well as social skills development (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). This theoretical underpinning has given rise to

cooperative learning designs such as jigsaw groups, structured discussions, or peer-assisted learning strategies that emphasise shared goals and mutual support.

Cooperative learning constructivism also underlies the cooperative learning movement. Key to this recursive-participatory thinking are constructivist theories from people like Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, who argued that knowledge emerges in the active construction by learners interacting with each other in meaningful ways. Social Constructivist Theory by Vygotsky (1978) characterises that learning in human beings depends on social connections, distributed by peer scaffolding and developmental levels (ZPD), as a significant factor for cognitive growth. In addition, cooperative learning employs constructivist principles in that students engage in discussion, argumentation, and doing complex tasks together governed by expected outcomes and at the same time creating new knowledge as well as pushing each other to question assumptions. Together, these perspectives highlight the importance of real-life problem-solving and peer support in fostering deeper cognitive engagement, making cooperative learning an ideal fit for language acquisition contexts. These are interactions that encourage students to ask questions as well as answer them, create more mental models for understanding concepts, and make one a bit self-aware about the learning itself. Thus, cooperative learning leads to critical thinking, conceptual understanding, and metacognitive awareness. Contemporary theorists as well as educational researchers support and add to it for an array of classroom contexts. For example, in his review of the effectiveness of cooperative learning methods Robert Slavin (1995), identified several highly significant conditions under which cooperative learning is most effective, such as the necessity for rewards at both group and individual levels. He showed how importance of structured group activities in educational attainment, especially in mixed-ability classrooms. Educational systems have long been using Slavin's Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD) and Teams-Games-Tournaments

(TGT) Models which prove the advantages of cooperative learning when it comes to academic outcomes for students.

In addition, the writings of Elizabeth Cohen (1994), on complex instruction and heterogeneous grouping have been incredibly informative in terms of figuring out how to make cooperative work for all sorts of kids. Using this process, Cohen researches how treating participation and status more equitably within groups diminishes the association between high-status students with low-performance peers while also creating a more fully collaborative learning environment. More importantly, her ideas about cooperative learning make it possible for all children to work well in groups regardless of their previous experiences or backgrounds. Cohen's research demonstrates how effective cooperative learning can be in fostering equitable participation, particularly in oral tasks, making it a valuable strategy for promoting speaking skills in diverse classrooms.

2.7 Definitions of Cooperative Learning

Understanding the definitions of cooperative learning is essential as it provides a foundational framework for exploring its implementation and effectiveness in educational settings. Cooperative learning has been defined by many scholars, each emphasising different aspects of the instructional strategy. Early educational psychologists like David and Roger Johnson were among the first to offer a foundational definition. In their work "Cooperative Learning in the Classroom" (1974), they define cooperative learning as "the instructional use of small groups in which students work together to maximise their own and each other's learning" (Johnson & Johnson, 1974, p. 5). This definition laid the groundwork for understanding cooperative learning as an approach based on peer collaboration and shared responsibility.

Expanding on this concept, Robert Slavin (1983), describes cooperative learning as "instructional methods in which students work in small groups to help each other learn" (Slavin, 1983, p. 16) which aligns with Johnson and Johnson's emphasis on the interconnectedness of individual and group responsibilities. He further emphasised that in cooperative learning settings, students not only work together on academic tasks but also take individual responsibility for both their own learning and the learning of their group members. This highlights the critical role of both individual accountability and group interdependence in ensuring the success of cooperative learning.

In addition to these foundational definitions, Johnson and Johnson (1999), introduced a more nuanced understanding of cooperative learning by identifying five key elements: positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, social skills development, and group processing. Positive interdependence refers to the idea that each group member's success is linked to the success of others, creating a shared sense of purpose. Individual accountability ensures that each one is responsible for their contributions. Promotive interaction involves direct collaboration, explanation, and elaboration among peers, fostering deeper learning. Social skills development focuses on building effective communication and teamwork, while group processing involves ongoing reflection and evaluation of group dynamics to improve learning outcomes.

Contemporary definitions have built upon these foundational ideas while integrating more recent insights into how cooperative learning functions in modern educational settings. For example, Gillies defines cooperative learning as an instructional approach where "students work together in small groups to achieve shared learning goals and to enhance both academic performance and social skills" (Gillies, 2016, p. 15). This definition emphasises the dual focus of cooperative learning on cognitive and social development. Additionally, Cohen (1994)

offers a definition that highlights equity and inclusivity, describing cooperative learning as "an approach that organises students into heterogeneous groups, ensuring equitable participation and mutual assistance" (Cohen, 1994, p. 21).

Furthermore, contemporary researchers have noted the importance of structured group activities. Johnson et al. (2014), define cooperative learning as "structured group work that promotes mutual support, shared learning objectives, and individual contributions within a supportive environment" (Johnson et al., 2014, p.88). This definition underscores the structured nature of effective cooperative learning and its ability to foster both academic and social growth.

Collectively, these definitions highlight the multifaceted nature of cooperative learning, underscoring its significance in fostering academic achievement, social skills, and inclusivity in diverse educational contexts.

2.8 Three Major Types of Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is a flexible instructional technique that enables students to work together in small groups for shared goals. It not only enhances academic ability, but also develops social skills such as speaking, listening to others, teamwork, and problem-solving. Among broad categories of cooperative learning, three main types include Formal Cooperative Learning (FCL), Informal Cooperative Learning (ICL), and Base Group/Learning Team Training (BGCL). Each of these types has distinct characteristics and applications in the classroom, especially in the context of developing speaking skills for ESL learners.

Formal Cooperative Learning (FCL) is particularly significant as it provides structured environments where ESL students can engage with specific content while practicing language skills in a collaborative setting. Informal Cooperative Learning (ICL) allows for spontaneous

and flexible group work, encouraging ESL learners to practice language skills in real-time conversations, thereby enhancing their fluency and confidence. Lastly, Base Group/Learning Team Training (BGCL) establishes ongoing groups that foster long-term relationships among students, which can be especially beneficial for ESL learners, as they build trust and support while practicing their speaking skills consistently.

Cooperative Learning Types	Description	Examples	Application for Speaking Skills
Formal Cooperative Learning	Structured group activities with clear goals	Jigsaw Technique, Think-Pair-Share	Role-playing scenarios, summarizing information, and presenting viewpoints.
Informal Cooperative Learning	Flexible, spontaneous peer interactions	Peer Tutoring, Group Discussions	Debates, role-playing conversations, interactive storytelling
Base Group Cooperative Learning	Long-term, stable groups for ongoing collaboration	Learning Team Model (LTM)	Group presentations, long-term projects, continuous dialogues

Cooperative Learning Framework Adapted from (Johnson & Johnson, 1999)

Table 2.1 Comparison of Cooperative Learning Types and Examples of Speaking Skills

2.8.1 Formal cooperative learning

Formal cooperative learning involves structured group activities designed by the teacher to achieve specific learning outcomes. It is characterised by carefully planned tasks, clear group goals, and well-defined roles that promote positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face interaction, and group processing (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Examples of formal cooperative learning strategies include the Jigsaw Technique and Think-Pair-Share (Slavin, 1995).

a. Jigsaw Technique

The Jigsaw Technique, first developed by Elliot Aronson in 1971, is a widely used formal cooperative learning strategy where students are divided into small groups, and each group is assigned different segments of the lesson content. Students become experts in their assigned topics and then teach their peers, ensuring that everyone learns from each other (Aronson, 1978). This method enhances speaking skills, particularly for ESL students, as it requires them to articulate their knowledge clearly and engage in meaningful dialogues.

Step	Description
1. Form Groups	Divide students into small groups with diverse members.
2. Assign Topics	Each group member is assigned a different part of the topic to become an expert on.
3. Research	Students independently research their assigned topic using provided resources.
4. Expert Groups	Students meet in 'expert groups' with peers who have the same topic to discuss and refine their knowledge.
5. Return to Home Groups	Students return to their original groups to share their expertise with each other.
6. Teach Each Other	Members teach their peers about their assigned topics, ensuring everyone learns from one another.
7. Reflect and Assess	Groups reflect on what they've learned and assess their understanding of the overall topic together.

Adapted from (Aronson, 1978)

Table 2.2: Jigsaw Technique Steps

This Jigsaw technique process encourages collaboration, peer teaching, and individual accountability, fostering a deeper understanding of complex topics among students.

The Jigsaw Technique not only facilitates collaborative learning but also specifically supports language acquisition for ESL learners by encouraging them to communicate and articulate their understanding of the material. As students take on the role of "experts" and teach their peers, they practice essential language skills such as vocabulary usage, pronunciation, and fluency, making this technique an effective strategy for enhancing both academic and linguistic proficiency.

b. Think-Pair-Share

The Think-Pair-Share technique is a widely recognised instructional strategy that promotes student engagement and collaborative learning, particularly effective for enhancing speaking skills among ESL learners in a supportive environment. In this approach, students first think individually about a question or problem, then pair up to discuss their ideas, and finally share their thoughts with the class (Lyman, 1987). This approach is particularly beneficial for ESL learners as it provides a supportive environment for language practice, allowing them to gain confidence in speaking and develop their ability to communicate effectively in English through structured interaction. Overall, the Think-Pair-Share technique serves as a valuable strategy in cooperative learning, as it enhances speaking skills and promotes active engagement, collaboration, and critical thinking.

Key features	**Benefits**
Three-Step Process	Break down the activity into thinking individually, discussing with a partner, and sharing with the group, promoting comprehensive engagement.
Individual Reflection	Allows students time to process information on their own, which can lead to deeper understanding and personal insight.

Partner Collaboration	Encourages students to articulate their thoughts and engage in meaningful dialogue with a peer, enhancing their communication and social skills.
Group Sharing	Provides an opportunity to present ideas to a larger group, which helps to reinforce learning through discussion and feedback.
Active Participation	Ensures that all students are actively involved in the learning process, reducing the likelihood of passive participation.
Encourages the Sharing of Diverse Perspectives	Facilitates the sharing of multiple viewpoints, enriching the learning experience and broadening students' understanding of the topic.
Promotes Critical Thinking	Stimulates students to think critically and reflect on their responses before and after discussions, enhancing cognitive skills.
Adaptable to Various Topics	Can be applied to a wide range of subjects and learning goals, making it a flexible and versatile teaching strategy.

Adapted from Lyman (1987), and general educational practices and literature.

Table 2.3: Key features and benefits of the Think-Pair-Share technique.

c. Round Robin

The Round Robin technique is an effective instructional strategy within cooperative learning that emphasizes equal participation and collective engagement among students, making it particularly relevant for enhancing the speaking skills of ESL learners. In this approach, students take turns sharing their thoughts or answers within small groups in a sequential manner. Each participant contributes one idea until all group members have spoken. This activity not only ensures equal participation but also allows students to practice speaking in a supportive group environment.

Moreover, the Round Robin technique specifically fosters language acquisition by providing structured opportunities for all students, including quieter participants, to

contribute. This systematic turn-taking boosts confidence and oral proficiency, creating a safe space for dialogue and collaboration (Kagan, 1994).

Overall, the Round Robin technique not only promotes collaborative learning and skill development but is also particularly significant for ESL learners as it addresses their unique language acquisition challenges, providing them with structured opportunities to practice speaking, build confidence, and enhance their communication abilities in a supportive environment.

The table below outlines how the Round Robin technique helps foster a collaborative learning environment and enhances various skills among students.

Key Features	**Benefits**
Structured Participation	Ensures that every student has an opportunity to contribute to the discussion, promoting equal participation and engagement.
Sequential Turn-Taking	Allows each student to take turns speaking in a systematic manner, which helps to develop listening skills and ensures that all voices are heard.
Small Group Collaboration	Facilitates interaction among students within small groups, enhancing cooperative learning and building teamwork skills.
Clear Time Management	Helps manage time effectively by providing a set period for each student to share, keeping discussions focused and on track.
Encourages Reflection and Thinking	Gives students time to reflect and articulate their thoughts clearly, improving their critical thinking and communication skills.
Promotes Engagement and Motivation	Keeps students actively involved in the learning process and motivates them to participate more, as everyone has a role and a turn.
Facilitates Peer Learning	Encourages students to learn from their peers by listening to a range of perspectives and responses during the Round Robin process.
Adaptable to Various Topics	Can be used with a wide range of subjects and topics, making it a versatile tool for different educational contexts and learning objectives.

(Adapted from Kagan, 1994).

Table2.4: key features and benefits of the Round Robin technique

2.8.2 Informal cooperative learning

Informal cooperative learning plays a crucial role in ESL classrooms by fostering spontaneous collaboration and interaction among students, which is essential for enhancing language acquisition and building communicative competence. Informal cooperative learning emphasizes spontaneous collaboration and interaction during everyday classroom activities. Unlike formal cooperative learning, which follows a pre-structured plan, informal cooperative learning is more flexible and student-driven. Peer tutoring and group discussions are common examples (Gillies, 2006).

a. Peer Tutoring

In peer tutoring, students alternate roles as tutors and tutee. The tutor helps the tutee understand concepts while reinforcing their own learning by explaining the material (Topping, 2009). For speaking skills, peer tutoring is beneficial in practicing dialogues, role-playing scenarios, or rehearsing speeches. The interactive nature of peer tutoring ensures personalised feedback and tailored learning experiences. Peer tutoring fosters an interactive environment where both parties practice explaining, questioning, and discussing in English, leading to improvements in speaking fluency (Topping, 2009; Falchikov, 2001).

In particular, the personalised interactions and feedback inherent in peer tutoring cater specifically to the language development needs of ESL students, enabling them to enhance their speaking fluency and confidence in using English in real-life contexts.

Key Feature	Description	Benefits
Mutual Learning	Both tutor and tutee are involved in the learning process.	Enhances understanding and retention for both participants (Topping, 2009).
Personalised Instructions	Tutors can tailor their explanations to meet the specific needs of their peers.	Improves comprehension through targeted support (Boud, 2001).
Increased Engagement	Peer tutoring often leads to higher levels of engagement and motivation in the classroom.	Boosts academic enthusiasm and participation (Ginsburg-Block, 2006).
Enhanced Social Skills	Encourages collaboration and communication between students.	Develops interpersonal skills and builds confidence (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006).
Cost-Effective	Utilizes existing resources and peers as tutors, reducing the need for additional staff or resources.	Provides a low-cost educational support system (Boud, 2001).
Reinforcement of Learning	Tutors reinforce their own knowledge while teaching others.	Strengthens understanding and application of content (Topping, 2009).
Flexible Scheduling	Peer tutoring sessions can be arranged to fit various schedules and needs.	Offers flexibility and convenience for both tutors and tutees (Ginsburg-Block, 2006).

Table 2.5: Key Features and Benefits of Peer Tutoring

b. Group Discussions

Group discussions provide opportunities for students to engage in cooperative dialogue, explore multiple perspectives, and debate ideas (Cohen, 1994). For ESL students, group discussions can be centered on current events or hypothetical questions that require them to express opinions, agree or disagree, and ask clarifying questions—all crucial for language acquisition and verbal fluency. Group discussions are particularly effective in informal settings, where students practice speaking without the

pressure of a formal evaluation (Gillies, 2006; Cohen, 1994). Ultimately, engaging in group discussions allows ESL learners to practice their language skills in a supportive environment, enhancing their confidence and fluency as they interact with their peers.

Key Features	**Benefits**
Structured Interaction	Encourages active participation from all group members.
Role Assignment	Ensures that each member has a specific role, increasing accountability.
Facilitation by the Teacher	Guides discussions, helps maintain focus, and provides support.
Use of Open-Ended Questions	Stimulates critical thinking and deeper understanding.
Peer Feedback and Reflection	Provides diverse perspectives and improves learning outcomes.
Group Accountability	Promotes collective responsibility and team cohesion.
Emphasis on Communication Skills	Enhances verbal expression, listening, and negotiation skills.
Incorporation of Diverse Perspectives	Broadens understanding by integrating different viewpoints.

(Adapted from Johnson & Johnson, 2014; Slavin, 2015)

Table 2.6: key features and benefits of the group discussion model in cooperative learning.

Comparison of Formal and Informal Cooperative Learning Strategies

Feature	**Formal Cooperative Learning**	**Informal Cooperative Learning**
Structure	Highly structured with clear objectives	Less structured and spontaneous
Teacher involvement	High teacher involvement in planning and monitoring	Low teacher involvement, student-driven
Group formation	Pre-determined by the teacher	Flexible, often self-selected by students
Example 1	Jigsaw Technique	Peer Tutoring
Example 2	Think-Pair-Share	Group Discussions

(Adapted from Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Gillies, 2006)

Table 2.7: Comparison of Formal and Informal Cooperative Learning Strategies

2.8.3 Base group cooperative learning

Base group cooperative learning is essential in fostering a stable environment that encourages collaboration and consistent practice among students, particularly for ESL learners. Base group cooperative learning involves stable, long-term groups that work together throughout an academic term or year. These groups provide continuous peer support and collaboration, fostering strong interpersonal relationships and a stable learning environment (Slavin, 1995).

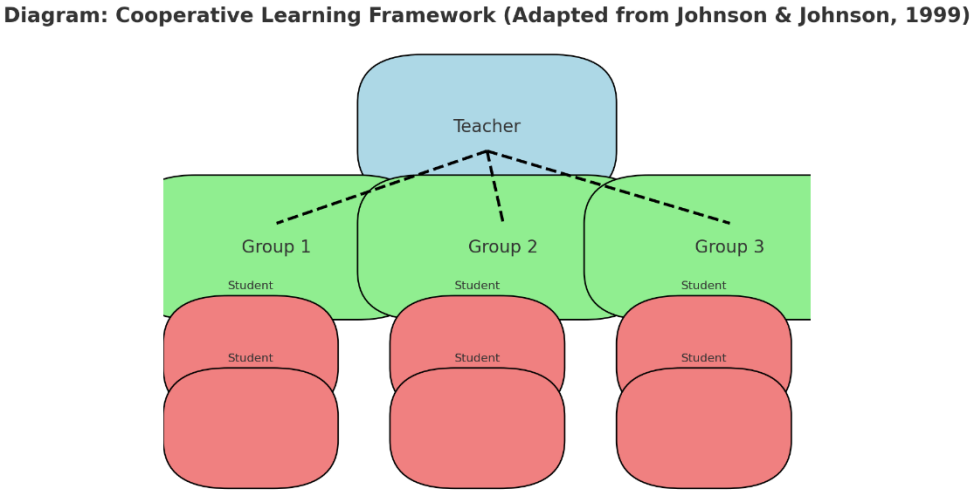


Figure 2.1: Base group cooperative learning

a. Learning Team Model

In this model, students are assigned to small teams at the beginning of the course and remain in these teams for extended periods. They collaborate on various projects, assignments, and classroom discussions, which helps build trust and cohesion (Slavin, 1995). In an ESL classroom, base groups might engage in long-term projects, such as researching and presenting on cultural topics, which offer ongoing practice in speaking

and presentation skills. The Learning Team Model is effective for ongoing projects, presentations, or consistent peer support. It helps students develop sustained speaking skills and fosters accountability and group cohesion (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

Role	**Responsibilities**
Team Leader	Facilitates group discussions, organizes tasks, and ensures participation.
Recorder	Takes notes during discussions, records group decisions, and prepares reports.
Reporter	Presents the group's findings and summaries to the class or other teams.
Encourager	Motivates team members, provides positive reinforcement, and ensures everyone contributes.
Checker	Monitors group progress, checks for understanding, and ensures that all tasks are completed.
Timekeeper	Keeps track of time, ensures that the group stays on schedule, and alerts the group of time limits.

Adapted from (Johnson & Johnson, 1999)

Table 2.8: Roles and responsibilities of students within a learning team in the base group cooperative learning team model.

b. Collaborative Projects

Collaborative projects serve as a vital component in ESL classrooms, as they not only promote teamwork but also create rich opportunities for language practice and development. Students work on extended projects that require regular meetings, discussions, and coordination. These projects typically span several weeks and require planning, research, and presentation skills. Collaborative projects involve substantial speaking opportunities as students must present their progress, exchange ideas, and provide constructive feedback (Slavin, 1995). Base Groups are particularly effective in creating a sense of community within the classroom, enabling consistent peer feedback, mutual support, and continuous opportunities for language practice (Johnson & Johnson, 2014).

The diagram below illustrates the structure of a Base Group cooperative learning model and its dynamics.

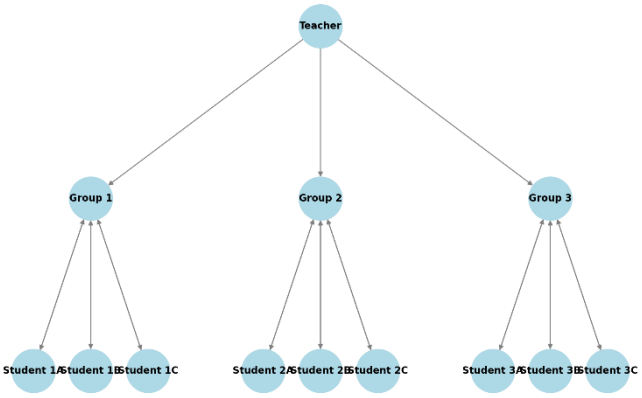


Figure2.2: Structure and Benefits of Base Group Cooperative Learning (Adapted from Johnson & Johnson, 2014)

2.9 Key Components of Cooperative Learning

The effectiveness of cooperative learning hinges on several fundamental components that collectively foster a supportive and engaging learning environment. First among these is **positive interdependence**. This concept encapsulates the mutual reliance of group members to achieve common objectives. In cooperative learning settings, tasks are meticulously designed to necessitate collaboration, meaning each member's success is intimately linked with the group's collective achievements (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). This interconnected approach compels students to work together, pooling their resources and supporting each other, which in turn enhances the group's overall performance and learning outcomes.

Another crucial element is **individual accountability**. This principle ensures that every student is held accountable for their learning and contributions to the group. Slavin (2014), argues that to preserve a high level of participation and effort, students are responsible for the results by using assessments that can measure both independent and group outputs. With the idea of individual responsibility driving it, learners are encouraged to participate openly and substantively in their learning groups which leads them to be accountable for what goes on with themselves as well as in the group.

Cooperative learning is more than just talking; it requires **Face-to-Face-Interaction** which means that group members communicate directly with each other during their work. Through face-to-face interaction students discuss, share ideas, and solve problems together which fosters engagement and communication (Gillies, 2016). This interaction not only aids in strengthening social skills such as listening and speaking but also helps in the negotiation of opinions, which can then be amalgamated to enhance learning.

Another important aspect is the development of **Collaborative Skills**. Examples include excellent communication skills, teamwork capacities, conflict resolution, and problem-solving which play an important role in successful teamwork (Johnson et al., 1998). Cooperative learning offers plenty of chances for students to practice and refine these skills. In many instances, teachers play a central role in teaching these skills and helping students work together. Mastery of collaborative skills equips students with the ability to work productively in various team settings, thereby improving their overall academic and social interactions.

A reflective exercise, **Group Processing** requires students to rate each other on how well their group collaborated and processed the task upon completion. The debriefing component includes what strategies were successful, setbacks experienced, and considerations for future group work (Costa & Garmston, 2015). In addition to contributing experiential learning opportunities, group processing helps the students further develop metacognition skillsets while adding a sense of shared accountability and understanding how they can most effectively navigate future collaborative work.

The combination of the five elements- positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face interaction, collaborative skills, and group processing provides a comprehensive framework for cooperative learning. They help students be more present, learn

necessary competence, and reach their collective educational success; creating a classroom of action-based learning for all.

2.10 Role of Teachers in Cooperative Learning

Teachers are facilitators of the learning process, in cooperative education. Their main role is to create and organise learning group exercises consistent with course objectives that enhance student collaboration (Johnson & Johnson, 2014). Teachers design work that requires students to interact with others, they write in explicit detail how the activity will play out and provide clear instructions. They also establish norms that foster a positive and supportive learning environment. This preparation ensures that students understand what they are supposed to do, their roles in the group, and why.

At a higher level, teachers are also facilitators who monitor and evaluate student progress. Slavin (2015) discusses that they monitor groups for many things whether, group members are working on tasks, in attendance, or contributing equally. Teachers provide feedback and evaluate both individual contributions and the performance of groups, ensuring quality collaboration as well as resolution to interpersonal problems that occur during conflicts or misunderstandings. These are then taken as observations and instructing techniques are adjusted according to that. This helps teachers to improve learning outcomes and handle possible challenges.

Teachers play a pivotal role in creating positive interdependence. They design structures and tasks that are intended to promote interdependence among students in an attempt for groups of learners to achieve shared goals (Gillies, 2016). Teamwork, communal responsibility, and mutual encouragement are necessary components for successful cooperative learning. Teachers power up the benefits of cooperative learning by creating an environment in which students want to work together.

2.11 Role of Students in Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning requires the active involvement of students who are fundamental to its success. They participate fully in group work by contributing their thoughts, views, and knowledge (Kagan, 1994). Their active engagement here is one of taking ownership of their learning and adding value to the collective efforts. Students have to do their part and that is finding opportunities in which they can learn from other students and develop skills among themselves.

One of the most important tasks is, communicating effectively with other students. One example of that is working cooperatively with other members of the team and more explicitly communicating information, asking for clarification or feedback (Johnson et al., 2014). A significant aspect of this is active listening — and communication more generally (without it, collaboration will not work) so all students need to practice clear expression for everyone in their group.

Students should not only be able to communicate effectively but interact collaboratively to become collective problem solvers. To this end, students are facilitated with the opportunity to identify problems together and investigate them from different perspectives as they create innovative solutions (Michaelsen et al., 2008). This requires knowing how to lean on one another, having riveting dialogue, and finding common ground. More recently, educational researchers have also been exploring the role of students as peers in solving problems together during cooperative learning experiences (Menard & Elliott, 2019), and leveraging a variety of group resources towards common goals.

In this way, teachers and students honour the roles that each plays in a dynamic environment of mutual support. The role of teachers is to provide support during the process. Teachers provide scaffolding for students, who actively and cooperatively learn. Such a

synergy results in increased academic effectiveness, socio-emotional development, and great overall learning experiences for all.

2.11 Challenges in Incorporating Cooperative Learning Strategies with Oral Skills

There are several challenges to incorporating cooperative learning strategies with oral skills development. These challenges; however, have implications for the effectiveness of cooperative learning in enhancing students' speaking ability from pedagogical and practical dimensions. Some of these challenges are:

2.11.1 Lack of teacher training and support

Integrating cooperative learning strategies to foster oral skills presents a major challenge because teachers have had little or no exposure and support focusing on teaching these methodologies. It remains the case that educators may not have had specific training in using effective approaches toward oral cooperative learning (Gillies, 2016). However, without proper training, teachers may struggle to frame and employ cooperative activities that make a difference in students' speaking proficiency. This gap can lead to activities being developed that are not conducive to producing the type of deep conversations, feedback, and practice we want our students to engage in. Without access to or the existence of training in cooperative learning and oral fluency, teachers will face obstacles inside their classrooms and will not be able to reinforce communicative practices.

2.11.2 Time constraints

Time constraints are another major issue. Due to the demands imposed by standards and because such factors force teachers to cover an elaborate curriculum within strict parameters of time, many teachers struggle with delivery formats that would not foster

interactive collaboration activities designed to develop oral skills among learners (Slavin, 1995). Teachers often choose traditional methods such as the lecture method because it is easier but then it does not give them much interaction to acquire speaking skills. Cooperative learning situations require teachers to invest time and the time required for planning and facilitating cooperative learning activities can be substantial, and teachers might find it challenging to balance this with other instructional demands. This might result in fewer cooperative activities for improving students' speaking abilities.

2.11.3 Classroom management concerns

Managing group dynamics effectively is crucial but challenging when implementing cooperative learning strategies aimed at developing oral skills. Teachers must navigate issues such as ensuring equitable participation, managing interpersonal conflicts; and maintaining focus during group activities (Johnson & Johnson, 2014). In cooperative learning environments, where students work in groups to practice speaking, there can be concerns about uneven participation and potential disruptions. Effective classroom management is essential to creating a conducive environment for speaking practice. Teachers may be apprehensive about these challenges, fearing that without proper management, cooperative activities could devolve into disorganised or counterproductive sessions, thereby negatively impacting students' opportunities to practice and refine their speaking skills.

2.11.4 Assessment issues

The issue of how to evaluate the speaking performance of an individual in a cooperative learning setting is rather complicated. It can be difficult to assess how well every student contributes to group discussions and their individual level of speaking (Webb, 2009). Teachers should develop assessments that test not just the process of cooperation but also demonstrate

proper methods to assess these two skills. The challenge here is to keep the balance between individual accountability, while at the same time taking into account group dynamics so traditional assessment methods like marking may not reflect all subtleties of oral skills developed by cross-group interactions. This leads to significant complexity and may explain why many teachers do not fully implement cooperative learning strategies, as they find it challenging to assess fairly and appropriately.

2.11.5 Resistance to change

An important obstacle to the implementation of cooperative learning strategies in oral communication is resistance to change. It represents a departure from traditional teacher-centered methods and many educators have trouble with this (Gillies, 2008). This can be due to a refusal of new ways of teaching, or doubts about whether cooperative learning would help improve students' speaking. Educators have reservations that must be addressed and they need evidence of the value of cooperative learning activities to work—and teachers require support, and incentives. Enacting this transition requires both changing particular forms of instructional practice and shifting broader beliefs about the role of speaking and interaction in language development.

2.12 Research on Cooperative Learning to Enhance the Speaking Skills of ESL Learners

Recent research in educational literature has shown a growing interest in cooperative learning as an alternative pedagogical approach to improve speaking skills among ESL students for its social interaction and supportive environment that are believed to be conducive for language acquisition. A review of relevant research indicates that there is a solid body of evidence demonstrating the benefits of oral proficiency gained through cooperative learning. Structured group interactions have significant potential to promote meaningful dialogue and

peer support (Johnson & Johnson, 1999), which are important aspects of spoken discourse development. Likewise, Slavin (1995), highlights cooperative learning as a means to bring about active involvement and linguistic exercise by way of working on collaborative tasks together. Other researchers highlight challenges such as the importance of appropriate teacher training, and how difficult it can be to measure individual learning outcomes in a group context (Webb, 2009). Overall, despite these constraints, cooperative learning is seen to improve language usage, student confidence, and communicative competence in ESL classrooms. This review brings together the empirical evidence in this field and critically analyses how cooperative learning strategies are adapted to suit ESL needs and enhance speaking skills within different teaching environments.

Alghamdi and Gillies (2013), conducted a 12-week study in ESL classes across four secondary schools to evaluate the impact of cooperative learning on EFL learners' outcomes. This study used 139 tenth-grade male students to examine the improvements in grammatical competence after using CL instead of traditional small-group learning. The study conducted a quasi-experimental design, pre-tests, and post-tests, and researchers proved that the experimental group who did CL showed better results as compared to the no-treatment group for grammar competence. The study found that CL can play a crucial role in grammar and also communication but it cannot always turn into excellent writing except if supported by teacher training. While this research provides an insightful comprehensive review of the well-recognised advantages of cooperative learning, it suggests further exploration of cooperative learning strategies for the improvement of language development in general. The critical role of teacher training for successful implementation has been highlighted in similar research, comparing cooperative learning to boost achievement (Johnson & Johnson 1999; Slavin, 1995). It improves grammar and communication not necessarily writing. Consistent with previous conclusions that cooperative learning can benefit individual academic skills

alternative methods might be needed to impact more comprehensive language competencies (Kagan, 1994). Possible future research could investigate long-term effects, as well as combine this intervention with other pedagogical strategies to support more integrated language learning.

Ning and Hornby (2014), investigated the effects of cooperative learning (CL), on tertiary EFL learners in China. A total of 100 first-year students were used for the study, half were randomly assigned to an intervention group that received instruction with CL techniques, and the other half allocated to a comparison group receiving traditional teacher-centered instruction methods. The intervention was based on the STAD (Student-Team Achievement-Division) and the NHT techniques, which were applied over 18 weeks with motivational scales from the LLOS -Language Learning Orientations Scale. This was consistent with the result that had a significant increase in intrinsic motivation in the intervention group, but extrinsic motivation had no significant difference. This is grounded in self-determination theory, which highlights the importance of intrinsic motivation for both student engagement and academic achievement (Deci & Ryan, 1985). This study has provided further support for previous research indicating that CL promotes intrinsic motivation by increasing student autonomy and supportive and cooperative peer interactions (Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Slavin, 1995). Nevertheless, limitations are present; in particular, the study period and size of samples may be inhibitive to capture immediate motivational changes or cultural motivations. The resultant themes capture the potency of CL in enhancing intrinsic motivation and can provide directions for future research to investigate its effects on different motivational dimensions over varied educational settings. These limitations should be addressed in future research, including the utilisation of a mixed-methods design to give a broader insight into motivation among ESL learners.

Al-Tamimi & Attamimi (2014), examined the impact of cooperative learning on speaking and attitudes with Yemeni undergraduate students at Hadhramout University. A quasi-experimental interrupted time series design was used in this study of 60 participants who answered pre and post-intervention oral tests (Likert scale questionnaires). The experimental group that was exposed to CL strategies noted improvement in speaking skills, with mean scores increasing from 63.37 through the posttest resulting at 69.00, and the attitude scale also showed a positive shift towards CL indicated by higher means of attitudinal scales. However, it was mainly based on quantitative tools and lacked elaborate insight into students' experiences during activities. The thesis contextualised a move from conventional grammar-based, teacher-centered instruction to an interactive student-involved method that placed value on the same interactions needed for language learning. These results are in line with previous works attesting to the benefits of CL for communicative competence (Pattanpichet, 2011; Talebi and Sobhani, 2012). Nonetheless, the study could benefit from incorporating supporting qualitative data such as student interviews or extending research on other aspects of CL. Furthermore, exploring the long-term retention of speaking skills would further substantiate the effectiveness of CL in language learning.

Essien (2015), explored the attitudes of first-year Early Childhood Education students toward cooperative learning (CL) and its impact on their English as a second language (ESL) acquisition. The research was quantitative in its design with students completing a four-point Likert scale questionnaire and researchers, recording the behavior of 42 beginner-level students, over ten weeks using a Cooperative Learning Behavioral Assessment Form. Analysis of the results revealed the enhancing effect of group work as several students commented that the process encouraged effective learning and enhanced critical thinking skills. However, one of the issues was to balance participation, as 90% of the students said that they faced some issues with it. Although the teacher observations revealed that students got used to CL

gradually, the study indicates that forming a more structured group, as well as using participation strategies pointed to an improvement in the success of the approach. Despite the clarity of the quantitative design in analysing the impression students have of group functioning, there are essential collected pieces of evidence that restrict objective assessment of the group process; questionnaires for self-completion are greatly subjective, and teacher observations. Some of the developments include interaction factors in language learning, group structure, and distribution of participation. This study supports previous research indicating that CL can be effective in ESL contexts by promoting communication and critical thinking abilities. However, the research could have benefited from the combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis to gather adequate information about the student's experiences and attitudes. Furthermore, a thorough examination of selected CL structures may give useful insights into particular strategies appropriate for the management of participation issues.

Through a qualitative phenomenological study, Lucena and San Jose (2016), conducted research to determine the efficiency of cooperative learning for improving speaking among grade five students in the Vicente Hizon Sr. Elementary School in Davao City. Data was collected employing detailed observations and focus group discussions thus, increasing its credibility and transferability. The findings included higher levels of learning facilitation observed in cooperative learning, more student engagement, confidence, and enhanced aspects of critical thinking and communication due to the increased interaction by learners, especially the shy ones. Another focus was on the effective implementation of the task-related work in the team, as well as the individual responsibility for the learning process together with the teacher's activity that combines rigorous discipline and kindness at the same time. The strengths of the work include the identification of the advantages of cooperative learning; however, it is also noticed that the authors apply a phenomenological method, and

consequently, the study is based only on a small, purposively selected group of participants, which makes it less generalisable. The study also relates to Vygotsky's social constructivism, which greatly stresses the societal aspect and learning environment. Some of the emerging subtopics include the benefits of social interaction in raising self-esteem, and how to establish the right balance in the learning process to foster language development. The study for practice implies that cooperative learning strategies must be well-matched to both the particular needs of the students and the overall educational objectives when used to foster speaking proficiency.

Raba (2017), explained that the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique in EFL classes enhances oral communication skills. The data was collected using the research design of a descriptive case study in conjunction with semi-structured interviews and classroom observations over an eight-week period. The results indicate that TPS had a positive effect on oral communication skills, believing in collaboration among students, and tend to be motivated for participation which increases their self-confidence. This is consistent with studies on small group discussion and TPS as seen in the research of Lyman (1981), which suggests that it works effectively to enhance interaction and reduce communication apprehension (Kagan, 1994; Johnson & Johnson, 1999). However, the study utilises qualitative data only, based on a limited number of lessons and interviews conducted. Findings from this research indicate that TPS enhances participation, confidence, and motivation, as well as improves speaking skills.

Astuti and Lammers (2017) employed a multi-case qualitative study to explore individual accountability in cooperative learning (CL) within the Indonesian secondary EFL context. Employing a constructivist epistemological framework they gathered data from the observation of two classes, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis of two secondary EFL classes. The research itself was informed by the Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) and the Interaction Hypothesis. The research demonstrated that structuring the target language, accountably enhanced reasonable chances of using the language in contrast to

the standard group works in which the learners relayed their ideas to each other in their first language. They identified four categories that enhanced communicative competence: individual responsibility confidence, pair work, and class presentation.

Despite the insights the study has provided on the effects of accountability in CL for language use, the research has some shortcomings. Applying the concept of mutual accountability only may lead to overlooking the interconnection of the other cooperative learning principles. All in all, the study stresses the necessity of personal responsibility to promote the English language acquisition of Indonesian EFL learners and offers CL practice suggestions for improvement.

Shafiee and Khavaran (2017) in their study investigated the influence of reflective and impulsive disposition on vocabulary outcomes while using cooperative learning strategies in EFL classrooms. This quantitative research design was conducted with 130 students of Fajr Institute. The students were selected based on their OPT (Oxford Placement Test) scores and were categorised as reflective or impulsive according to Eysenck's Impulsivity Questionnaire (EPQR) developed by Eysenck & Barrett in 1985. Experimental groups employed the Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) method and a control group received traditional instruction. Pre- and post-tests were used to assess vocabulary achievement, revealing greater language gains with the experimental groups than for controls on pre-test/post-test measures; reflective learners outperformed impulsive learners. As such, these results corroborate earlier studies that have found STAD-based cooperative learning methods more effective in enhancing vocabulary. (Pan & Wu 2013; HoonSeng 2006).However, while a few past researchers do not agree with this view and argue for the efficacy of variability in instructional approaches (Dabaghmanesh & Soori, 2014), evidence still points out that the reflective learning technique, of which cooperative approach plays an essential part, can be used to increase the participation, engagement, and academic success. These findings support the use of cooperative learning in

vocabulary instruction and call for more studies examining its association with different language skills and the distinction of learner types.

Kandasamy and Habil (2018) studied the effect of cooperative learning on speaking skills with lower-secondary students in Malaysia. This qualitative study involved one-on-one interviews with 36 Form One students and the thematic analysis was conducted to capture their experiences. Results indicated that cooperative learning facilitated more collaboration with peers, tech use, confidence building, increased fluency, reduced stress when presenting, and overall improvement in speaking skills. Students felt that using digital resources had improved their ability to communicate more fluently and with greater confidence. The study highlighted how some teachers resorted to using native languages whilst also demonstrating the difficulty of ensuring target language (TL) use, especially at early stages. Though the study well articulates how cooperative learning can change one-factor teacher-centered into two-factor student-driven settings, its small sample size and sole focus on organisational restrictions limit the wider application of results. However, it still provides insights into helping students to minimise public speaking anxiety and enhance autonomy when they are in the process of learning English as a second language through cooperative learning.

The study by Yavuz and Arslan (2018) investigated the effect of cooperative learning on English language skills in an Anatolian high school involving 66 tenth graders. This was a quasi-experimental design comparing an experimental group using cooperative learning techniques with a control group that continued with their traditional teaching. Researchers evaluated outcomes using standardised tests of vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, and listening skills. The experimental group scored significantly higher than the control group in all these areas. Cooperative learning worked best for helping with vocabulary, grammar, and listening as well as reading support. Importantly, although the study was carried out with

rigorous quantitative evidence (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.85), qualitative insights were not present based on student experiences. This limitation suggests that it may not adequately address communicative competence and learner confidence. The study illustrates how peer-to-peer interaction can improve language and is compatible with Vygotsky's Theory of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and Bandura´s (1977) social learning theory. Nevertheless, because of the specific context and absence of qualitative data, the result may not be comprehensive.

Alrayah (2018) focused on how cooperative learning activities affect ELL's oral fluency. The study adopted an explanatory-descriptive methodology, which included recorded interviews and statistical analysis, with SPSS, conducted with 48 first-year students in Sudan. These students were split among an experimental and a control group. The experimental group followed cooperative learning practices such as Jigsaw and Think-Pair-Share for a month, while the control group continued with conventional methods. The experimental group raised their overall fluency rate by 25.5 percent compared to the control group, which improved substantially less on average. Although the validity of the statistical results was confirmed, the study lacks qualitative data or longer term follow up plans that would provide insight into how fluency emerges over time. Nonetheless, the findings are in line with social interdependence theory and suggest among other things reduced anxiety, increased peer interaction, and improved communicative competence as key benefits of cooperative learning.

Namaziandost et al. (2019) investigated the use of cooperative learning (CL) and its impact on oral proficiency and motivation among intermediate EFL learners in Iran. In the study, 90 male students were divided into an experimental group which was taught with cooperative learning techniques (CLT), and a control group that used traditional teaching. The data were collected from a pre- and post-treatment speaking test as well as used questionnaires

that included a seven-point Likert scale to understand motivation. Overall, the increased values in speaking skills and intrinsic motivation were statistically significant for the experimental group as opposed to control where minimal changes were seen. While the study helps in highlighting some of the benefits of CL to intrinsic motivation, it is done so from a more narrow perspective and could learn further about other aspects of motivations. Utilization of ANCOVA and t-tests bolsters the findings, though participants' demographics may impede generalisability. Themes that emerged from the research include how CL can lower speaking anxiety, and increase active engagement. These findings are consistent with the literature that advocates for a CL in learner-centered education generally. Nevertheless, for CL to succeed as intended in a broader form, future studies might consider incorporating a wider range of participant demographics and extending the duration of instructional periods to explore how CL can be adapted to diverse educational contexts.

Ehsan, Vida & Mehdi (2019), carried out research on the significance of cooperative learning for speaking skills and motivation with Iranian EFL students. To quantify the change in language ability for speaking, an English oral test was administered and for motivation, a seven-point Likert scale questionnaire was used. The traditional group showed low motivation and less improvement in speaking skills compared to the experimental one, which participated in the CL activities. These findings provide additional evidence for the effectiveness of CL as an effective means to provide rich and interesting context-promoting language learning settings to which achievements and motivation are associated (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Slavin, 2014). This is in line with other studies that show that CL can enhance students' motivation and speaking skills, and that motivation decreases when amotivation is present (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Gillies, 2016).

The research supports that shifting from a traditional, teacher-directed paradigm to a more participatory, student-centered approach (Kagan 1994; Richards & Rodgers, 2014), enhances speaking skills, fluency, accuracy, and motivation. There are indications that CL promotes language development and speaking as well as learners' motivation in the process. The focus on internal motivation is consonant with the framework of self-determination theory and offers suggestions for enhancing language instruction.

Ozdemir and Yildirim (2020), conducted their research through a non-equivalent control group pre-test post-test design to answer the question of how cooperative learning affects grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension skills, and listening skills among sixty-six 10th-grade students. The experimental group in this study participated using cooperative learning, while the control group received traditional instruction. This used an Academic Achievement Test with a high reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.85) to examine outcomes, and statistical analysis was performed using SPSS 20.0 representing percentage score/range for each group via paired samples t-test and ANCOVA respectively. Results showed that the experimental group made significant gains in vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, and listening skills compared to the control one. This is consistent with other educational research, which found that language competence improves through cooperative learning in a socially interactive classroom (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Slavin, 2014). Nevertheless, a better validation of this study would derive from an analysis regarding the internal functioning of those cooperative groups as well as closer scrutiny of how these strategies are put into place. The results of this study are in line with a long body of literature revealing that pedagogical approaches stressing CL lead to a marked improvement in language abilities overall.

Singh et al. (2020), explored how the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) strategy affects speaking skills among weak ESL learners in Malaysia. They used a qualitative observational approach

combined with action research, implementing TPS across three cycles. In each cycle, students first thought individually about a question, then discussed their thoughts with a partner, and finally shared their ideas with the class. Some of the problems that the students faced and which were addressed in the framework of the study included lack of confidence, restricted opportunities to use words and phrases that were necessary for speaking, and psychological barriers. Students' overall confidence, fluency, pronunciation, and correct use of vocabulary were significantly highlighted after the third cycle proved that the techniques were effective. This implies that through TPS, active participation and collaboration learning among the students enhanced their English speaking abilities. The result hence corroborates prior research, which posits TPS as an influential means in the development of speaking proficiency and self-esteem enhancement (Lyman, 1987; Kagan, 1994). Malaysian ESL learners benefited from the TPS intervention as shown in Singh et al.'s (2020) study underscores cooperative learning strategies for solving specific learning and teaching problems as supported by Johnson and Johnson (2009). Prominent themes are the psychological barrier removal and students' motivation and engagement in the process according to the key principles of constructivism based on Vygotsky's socio-cognitive theory (Vygotsky, 1978). There is room for further studies in TPS methodologies for example, with a broader population of students and analysis of TPS impact on the long-term development of several aspects of language.

Another study conducted by Prihamdani (2020) examined the 'Number Heads Together' cooperative learning method in developing the speaking skills of 8th-grade students. The research was an experimental study with the use of a quantitative design, where 40 students were allocated to groups and compared between teaching methods implemented that were CL vs traditional methods. Improvements were measured using pre-tests and post-tests, which were analysed using a t-test. The findings revealed that the participants in the experimental group outperformed the other group in each aspect. The finding reinforces that cooperation is

a beneficial method for improving English language skills (Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Slavin, 1995). It is reinforced by literature stressing that cooperative learning produces a context in which learners are involved and language is acquired (Kagan, 1994). The research suggested that even though the "Number Heads Together" approach motivates students and helps them develop speaking skills, its optimal deployment needs a solid basis of preparation for teachers. This is in line with other research that highlighted the need for teacher support to optimise the benefits of cooperative learning methods (Gillies, 2016).

Siddique et al. (2020), explored the effects of cooperative learning on English language proficiency and academic achievements for 8th-graders in Lahore. This study was a quasi-experimental one where an experimental group had a cooperative learning experience, while the control group received traditional instruction. Students were assessed over the course of approximately ten weeks using English Language Proficiency Tests (EPT) and English Achievement Tests (EAT), both before and after the intervention. Achievement test results indicated significant performance improvements in reading, listening, and grammar for the experimental group compared to that of the control group. The research study supports the existing research of Ahmad and Mahmood (2010), which also concluded that cooperative learning can lead to better student achievement. This study highlights the value of group work, developing more collaborative and engaged learners who are both able to use language effectively (more proficient) and with superior academic outcomes. The research indicated that cooperative learning leads to a profound improvement in language skills and academic achievement; however, further inquiry is needed to establish whether these gains are long-lasting, with the context of instruction being an important factor for its effectiveness. Future research should consider extending the intervention period and diversifying assessment tools for a deeper exploration of long-term efficacy concerning student performances in cooperative learning and its impact on oral proficiency.

Nguyen, and Nguyen (2021) explored Vietnamese teachers' perceptions and practices of cooperative learning (CL) in English language classrooms. The study involved 46 teachers from 10 schools, using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as data collection tools. The quantitative data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) while the qualitative data was analysed thematically. The general perception towards CL was positive, the teacher participants had a good grasp of CL principles and were aware of the benefits of CL in increasing learners' participation, achievement, and social skills. Still, difficulties like overcrowding of classes, noise as well as managing discipline were major sources of hindrance to its successful adoption. Nevertheless, one major shortcoming still observed in the constant implementation of CL strategies is the inconsistency that is mainly attributed to such practicalities. Interpreting the findings of the study by the framework of prior research on the advantages of CL, certain limitations can be identified. The results are based on learners' perceptions and might not reflect their actual interactions in the classroom. Also, the small size of the sample population makes the findings of the study limited in applicability to other educational environments, though it is appropriate within the targeted educational context. Some of the findings included theoretical positive attitudes and realistic considerations, a call for specific pre-service and in-service preparation, and effective classroom behaviour management. The study adds to the literature discussion by revealing the continued existence of the issues between CL understanding on the part of the teacher and the actuality of CL implementation, which suggests a need for a more systematic method of teacher support.

Pilataxi Minda (2022) examined how cooperative learning strategies can improve English speaking skills among junior school students. The study used a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys and interviews, to explore the effectiveness of activities like spontaneous dialogues and role-plays. Key findings highlight that students prefer interactive

methods, with pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency emerging as the most valued components for improving oral skills. The study demonstrates that cooperative learning has the potential to boost student engagement, confidence, and motivation by fostering a more supportive learning environment. Despite proposing a well-structured cooperative learning guide, the study could have explored challenges in consistent implementation more deeply. The emphasis on creating interactive, student-centered activities is a key takeaway, offering valuable insights for improving ESL teaching practices, though further research in diverse educational settings is needed to confirm its broader applicability.

Adjal et al. (2022), researched implementing cooperative learning to enhance students' speaking ability using a descriptive qualitative approach. They used a questionnaire and classroom observations to gather data from two groups. According to the study, cooperative learning considerably improved students' speaking and resulted in higher engagement and more oral production. Research is in line with Tarigan (2001), and other past research that reveals significant improvements in proficiency and speaking skills. The study proposes that future research could examine the effects of different models of cooperative learning on language proficiency to bring out the best practices.

Another study conducted by Guaranga Lema (2022), aimed to answer how cooperative learning affected speaking skills in young adult EFL learners with a pre-experimental design consisting of 35 students from Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo. Using a pre-and post-test design, the study combines qualitative and quantitative data to investigate oral proficiency development. There was a significant improvement in grammar and vocabulary, discourse management, pronunciation as well as interactive communication. By synthesising and supporting emerging themes, it can be argued that cooperative learning is beneficial in terms of peer interaction as well – which seemed to be better fostered through cooperative learning

than whole class teaching, as active engagement during speaking tasks. The results confirm the potential benefit of approaches such as Numbered Heads and Jigsaw in practice with broader implications for similar educational contexts.

Elsayed (2023), conducted a qualitative study exploring the factors affecting Qassim University EFL students' acquisition of English speaking skills. Utilising semi-structured interviews with thirty students from the Intensive Course Program, Elsayed employed qualitative content analysis to uncover key influencing factors. The conclusions found out motivational concerns (e.g., motivation), emotional concerns (e.g., anxiety), methods of teaching (e.g., classroom environment and instruction), and linguistic factors (e.g., lexical and phonological concerns) were influential. While motivation and anxiety levels affect speaking skills, classroom environment, group dynamics, and instruction also play an important role in the development of speaking skills. Hence, the major strength of the study is that the factors have been examined from multiple perspectives level as to how they interact. However, the research is limited by its focus on male students and a specific educational context, potentially affecting its broader applicability. Emerging themes include the complex interaction between psychological barriers and pedagogical practices, suggesting that future research should consider these factors in tandem to develop comprehensive strategies for improving EFL speaking skills.

In a study by Gonfa (2023), the efficacy of cooperative language learning (CLL) on grade ten students' speaking skills was examined at Guto Adulan Secondary School. The research employed a mixed-methods approach with questionnaires and observations as well as interviews gathered from 54 students and two EFL teachers, analysed both quantitatively (involved the analysis of frequencies using SPSS) and qualitatively. Results indicated that even though cooperative learning was practised, it could not be fully realised because of pedagogical

practices which were still bound by the traditional teacher-student-centered teaching approach, and also due to logistical constraints, such as large class size and a lack of proper understanding about CLL. Most importantly, the study points to a theoretical promise of CLL (e.g., in fostering student talk and feedback) that falls short on practical account due to classroom logistics as well as teaching styles. The themes identified included that compared with intention, the engagement in CLL cooperative activities appeared to be limited, and despite its potential efficacy, a more supportive learning environment is needed to optimise this form of teaching. It is suggested that teacher training and classroom management should be improved to maximise the effectiveness of CLL, however, more research needs to focus on these dimensions in other educational contexts as well as how cooperative learning can be administered so that students' speaking ability could reach an optimum level.

Ramesh, Jenitha, and Sushma (2023), researched using cooperative language learning to improve teaching English as a second or foreign language with special reference to structured group interactions for communication skills. Their study critically reviews the development of cooperative learning, from its theoretical roots in United States schools during the 1970s to contemporary practices worldwide across various educational settings. The methodology is mainly based on literature including different theoretical frameworks and previous studies. The major areas identified from this review are the fostering of inclusivity, encouraging critical, social, and leadership skills among learners as well as alleviating foreign language learning anxiety. This study's authors believe that employing cooperative learning strategies, such as Formal and Informal Cooperative Learning methodologies can create environments that enable students to engage with one another more meaningfully through the use of language in authentic contexts. The study also says that managing classrooms with students of diverse backgrounds and maintaining a uniform level of participation poses

potential implementation challenges. The research concludes that cooperative learning is beneficial for the development of ESL learners' speaking skills.

2.13 Comparative Analysis of Studies on Cooperative Learning and Speaking Skill Development

2.13 .1 Engagement, participation, and motivation

In the studies reviewed, engagement and participation emerge as pivotal components in the effectiveness of cooperative learning (CL). Singh et al. (2020) and Prihamdani (2020) both highlight that methods such as Think-Pair-Share (TPS) and "Number Heads Together" significantly boost student engagement by fostering interactive and supportive learning environments, aligning with Johnson and Johnson's (1999) theoretical framework, which suggests that CL methods enhance learner involvement through collaborative tasks. This is further supported by Ehsan et al. (2019) and Alghamdi & Gillies (2013), who demonstrate that CL increases intrinsic motivation, making learning more engaging and relevant, corroborating Deci and Ryan's (1985) assertion that motivated students are more likely to actively participate. By contrast, the traditional methods compared by Singh et al. (2020) across all learning outcomes are generally lesser in comparison, indicating CL's ability to enhance learner participation. Additionally, Ehsan et al. (2019), pointed out that CL enhanced students' participation in speaking activities which goes in line with Johnson and Johnson's (2009) emphasis on positive interdependence as well as Vygotsky's (1978) social interaction theory. This is congruent with Slavin's (1995) conclusions regarding CL's role in improving student engagement. Ehsan et al. (2019) found the motivation to be significantly higher with CL methods, which aligns with Deci & Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Conversely, Abdullah et al. (2019) noted that while CL benefited motivation, it was more

effective for intrinsic motivation, emphasising the need to address varying motivational demands in CL, as highlighted by Dörnyei (2001).

2.13 .2 Speaking skill development and vocabulary usage

A major focus across the studies is the development of speaking skills, including language accuracy, fluency, pronunciation, intonation, and linguistic complexity. Ehsan et al. (2019) reveal that cooperative learning (CL), particularly when combined with task-based activities, leads to significant improvements in these areas, such as enhanced fluency and accuracy. Similarly, Prihamdani (2020) reports that the "Number Heads Together" technique contributes to better pronunciation and fluency, aligning with Vygotsky's (1978) theory that interactive learning environments enhance language proficiency. Singh et al. (2020) highlight that increased participation through CL leads to better vocabulary acquisition, which is consistent with Swain's (1985) view that cooperative interactions provide ample opportunities for vocabulary use and retention. The results present CL as having a critical function in improving various types of spoken skill development as part of a holistic means to develop language abilities. Additionally, Singh et al. (2020) and Ehsan et al. (2019) both found that language production through CL resulted in statistically significant improvements in speaking skills, reflecting Swain's (1985) Output Hypothesis which posits that language production through peer interaction aids learning. The findings of this research support the proposition that practicing CL strategies like TPS and Jigsaw, in a risk-free and supportive environment fosters improved fluency and accuracy and corroborates Webb and Mastergeorge's (2003) finding on enhanced language skills through cooperative learning. Another clear highlight is the growth of vocabulary usage, Singh et al. (2020) and Ehsan et al. (2019) have reported that CL methods enrich the process of learning vocabulary. These findings support the framework of vocabulary learning proposed by Nation (2001) which suggests that interactive techniques enhance

effective vocabulary acquisition, as well as an earlier study by Aronson (1978) that Jigsaw teaching promotes the contextual use of new words.

2.13 .3 Social interactions, peer support, collaboration, and group dynamics

Cooperative learning (CL) is based on social interaction and peer support, and studies have shown that CL can significantly increase these. Alghamdi & Gillies (2013) and Singh et al. (2020) have observed that CL is based on supportive group and community dynamics through which participants support each other and where such involvement fosters an environment in which learning should occur interactively. This aligns with Slavin's (1995) theoretical perspective on positive interdependence and peer support in CL. Ehsan et al. (2019) and Singh et al. (2020) also noted peer support and interaction as outcomes of CL, based on Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory — to learn is to grow socially, which is consistent with Johnson & Johnson (1999). According to Johnson and Johnson (1999), CL is not only effective at enhancing speaking skills but also builds relationships among students and boosts their confidence. Conversely, traditional methods often lack these interactive elements, resulting in less effective peer support mechanisms and reduced group cohesion. Group dynamics and collaboration are similarly crucial in CL. Ehsan et al. (2019) observed improved group dynamics due to the implementation of CL strategies, reflecting Johnson & Johnson's (2009) emphasis on group cohesion and cooperation, and Singh et al. (2020) highlighted the positive impact of structured group interactions, consistently with Tuckman's (1965) model of group development.

2.13 .4 Critical thinking, overcoming challenges & barriers, and teacher's role

Critical thinking development and overcoming challenges are prominent themes in the literature on cooperative learning (CL). Ehsan et al. (2019) and Prihamdani (2020) underscore that CL fosters critical thinking and problem-solving by engaging students in collaborative

tasks, aligning with Dillenbourg's (1999) assertion that CL environments enhance cognitive complexity through higher-order thinking. However, there are challenges such as language barriers, limited vocabulary, and varying student proficiency that persist, as noted by Singh et al. (2020) and Alghamdi & Gillies (2013). These issues highlight the necessity of effective teacher support and facilitation, as emphasised by Singh et al. (2020) and Prihamdani (2020). Teachers play a crucial role in creating a supportive learning environment and facilitating CL activities to address these barriers, as indicated by Wood (1998). The development of critical thinking through CL is supported by Ehsan et al. (2019) and Singh et al. (2020) who found that methods like Think-Pair-Share (TPS) encourage higher-order thinking and problem-solving, consistent with Gillies' (2008) findings. Additionally, overcoming barriers such as lack of confidence and passive learning is a significant theme, with Singh et al. (2020) showing how TPS can help students overcome the fear of speaking and boost their confidence, reflecting Brown's (2014) perspective on using interactive methods to address language learning challenges.

2.13 .5 Cognitive complexity

Cognitive complexity, involving the ability to handle complex information and tasks, is another area where CL proves beneficial. The research indicates that CL enhances cognitive engagement by providing opportunities for deep processing of content. Ehsan et al. (2019) noted that CL promotes cognitive complexity by involving students in collaborative problem-solving activities, which is consistent with Piaget’s (1976) theories on cognitive development through interactive learning.

2.13 .6 Confidence

Building confidence is a significant outcome of CL. Both Singh et al. (2020) and Ehsan et al. (2019) reported increased student confidence as a result of participating in CL activities. This is in line with the findings of Bandura (1997) who emphasised the role of social learning and peer interactions in boosting self-efficacy and confidence.

2.13 .7 Teacher's support and facilitation

In CL, teacher support and facilitation play an important role. Consequently, the studies emphasise the role of teachers in the successful implementation and support of CL. The reviewed studies attest to the need for teacher training and support in applying CL strategies effectively in the classrooms. This also aligns with the work of Sharan (1994), who elaborated on the need for human guidance and scaffolding during collaborative activities. While the literature underscores the critical role of teacher support and facilitation in implementing cooperative learning strategies effectively—encompassing aspects such as speaking skill development, social interaction, peer support, and critical thinking—there remains a significant gap in understanding how these methods influence the specific developmental and contextual needs of ESL 8th-grade learners. Numerous theoretical and empirical studies have been done in the area of cooperative learning (CL) to suggest how CL should be successfully implemented by teachers to develop speaking skills among ESL learners, but many lacunae need further research. Although available studies have examined the effects of CL on language learning, most do not consider how these methods influence oral proficiency among ESL 8th-grade students in a school. Existing research is not addressing the specific developmental and contextual needs of these middle school students. This study provides detailed information on how the CL approach is working or not with this age group since its focus is the 8th-grade ESL

learners. This study will examine the role of teachers, their support, and facilitation in promoting cooperative learning and the challenges faced by students.

This will improve the educational experiences of future teachers and curriculum developers, as well as policymakers by creating a detailed case study for the specific context. Moreover, it will provide a platform for further studying the efficacy of CL in other school grades and settings as well as among different groups of learners. It would be a contribution with implications for educational research and conceptualising how CL affects language learning in different contexts. The results of the study can help to design more motivating and effective learning environments, inform curriculum development, and influence teacher training. Moreover, drawing attention to the need for evidence-based practices will stimulate additional research on CL in other learning domains and populations, thereby extending educational knowledge of effective practises and eventually enhancing language teaching outcomes.

2.14 Chapter Summary

The chapter gives a detailed presentation of cooperative learning (CL) in relation to the development of speaking skills based on selected studies from various theoretical approaches. The structured group CL work and interaction with peers leads to substantial improvement in the speaking skills of learners, promoting engagement, participation, and confidence amongst them. This meta-analysis found that CL methods, Think-Pair-Share, Jigsaw, and peer tutoring improve all of the different components such as fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary in speaking respectively. These approaches have a theoretical basis in the constructivism of Vygotsky and social interaction learning theory, which posits that discourse and the negotiation of meaning mediated through more knowledgeable others can foster cognitive development by encouraging students to learn socially with one another. Studies show student motivation, and

confidence is improved when peers are actively collaborating as they acquire new linguistic skills together.

Additionally, the chapter reviewed in-depth past studies that highlighted CL as a practical activity to undertake in different educational settings while also noting its positive influence on ESL learners' speaking abilities. The review also discussed other ways that CL has overcome the barriers to learning a foreign language, such as shyness or lacking vocabulary through a supportive environment in which everyone participates. The issues highlighted in this chapter reveal that further research is needed on particular educational contexts, especially regarding middle-grade ESL learners and other groups. It also illustrated gaps in the current literature and called for additional research on CL methods tailored to the developmental and contextual needs of 8th-grade students. The results support the importance of CL integration in pedagogical and policy design to optimise language proficiency and its impact on instructional design. The present study highlights the importance of cooperative learning for 8th-grade students and dynamic teaching approaches in improving speaking skills. It suggests directions for future research to build on existing knowledge and refine educational practices.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research methodology is the backbone of any research, which guides a systematic method of data collection and analysis to derive meaningful conclusions. During this stage, researchers need to identify appropriate tools and strategies to collect data that are consistent with the objectives of their investigation as well as their theoretical framework (Creswell & Creswell, 20118). In this chapter, detailed explanations of the research methodology have been given which includes; (1) Research approach, theoretical framework, (2) data collection methods and analysis techniques used. This research uses a combination of data sets – the student questionnaire is based on Likert scale responses and teacher interviews conducted were semi-structured to provide an insight into how cooperative learning encourages speaking skills in 8th-grade ESL learners. The choice of these tools is actually on account of the demand for triangulation which in turn allowed the investigator to cross-validate past studies and additionally improve empirical stability about outcome (Patton, 2015). This chapter, therefore, not only lays the foundation of findings from this study but also highlights how various methodologies are integrated within a structured methodological framework and ultimately why methods need to be carefully chosen to fulfill research objectives.

3.2 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a term used to highlight a set of beliefs and understandings that serve as the lens through which research design, methodology selection process, and data analysis tools are chosen (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It includes the philosophy of reality (ontology), how knowledge is produced, by whom (epistemology), and methodologies or methods used to collect such attitudes (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). It is important to understand

the paradigm as it impacts all stages of research; from forming questions to interpreting results. An aligned paradigm to the objectives of a study ensures consistency and applicability, thereby enabling the researcher to effectively address its research problem (Kuhn, 1970).

The three main research paradigms are positivism, interpretivism, and, pragmatism. Positivism is based on the belief that reality is objective and can be observed and measured through quantitative methods. It focuses on hypotheses, variables, and causal relationships (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). Interpretivism means that reality is subjective and socially constructed. It emphasises qualitative methods to understand human experiences and interactions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Pragmatism is a more flexible approach, mixing both quantitative and qualitative approaches, and focuses on practical solutions rather than adhering strictly to philosophical doctrines (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The selection of a paradigm is based on the research objectives, context, and the nature of the research questions being explored.

Pragmatism is an innovative and highly operative research methodology since it essentially aims at identifying and implementing ideas and/or solutions to pertinent issues. With origins in the writings of Charles Peirce, William James, and John Dewey, pragmatism is a concept that stresses the fact that the reality and meaning of ideas are dependent on and derived from the effects that they have (Biesta & Burbules, 2003). This paradigm nullifies the concept of objectivity of reality and the purpose of knowledge then becomes dependent on the context, experience, and the value of the outcome (Morgan, 2014). Using the tenets of pragmatism, a researcher can use both qualitative and quantitative research methods as tools through which to solve certain research questions, because according to Creswell and Plano Clark (2017), qualitative and quantitative data are compatible in generating holistic, utilitarian results. Pragmatism focuses on the research questions first and supports methodological

pluralism. Thus, it fits well with the mixed-method research design that aims at incorporating both breadth and depth in the investigation process.

3.2.1 Rationale for using pragmatism

With regard to the present study, which aims to identify the role of cooperative learning on the speaking performance of grade-8 ESL learners, pragmatism is chosen because it provides a broad yet nuanced approach that includes both quantitative analysis and qualitative interpretation. The quantitative data collected from the student questionnaire enables the measurement of students' language proficiency while the interviews with teachers, which are semi-structured, provide the researcher with qualitative data on instructional strategies, students' participation, and difficulties encountered (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Consistent with this dual approach, the pragmatic worldview emphasises the utility of both quantitative and thematic approaches since the study will be capable of producing findings that will be useful in meeting a range of education-related challenges (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Furthermore, pragmatism also respects the richness, practicality, and contending presence of both student and teacher experiences if cooperative learning strategies in the complex arena of education are to be developed. Thus, the choice of the pragmatic paradigm and the mixed-method design guarantees that the results are valuable and applicable in the context of practicing educators' work.

3.2 Mixed-Method Design

This approach is employed when research requires some qualitative as well as quantitative techniques to partly address the issue (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). By combining both methods, they ameliorate the benefits found in each while mitigating flaws. Studying inherently complex phenomena on multiple levels of analysis, helps us understand

and add depth to a much richer phenomenon and consequently increases both the face and construct validity/reliability of findings (Johnson et al., 2007).

3.2.1 Rationale of mixed-methodology design

The reason for using a mixed-methodology design in this study derives from the ability of such studies to provide deeper insights into research questions. To obtain validity and reliability, cross-verification of the results from different sources is recommended (Denzin, 2012), then utilising a mixed methodology allows for this. In this way, triangulation makes certain that findings obtained from the quantitative questionnaire are supplemented with a qualitative teacher interview thus minimising the chance of bias making for a more holistic understanding of how cooperative learning impacts speaking skills. Triangulation is especially important in educational research, as detailed descriptions of both measurable benchmarks and the qualitative experiences that inform them are necessary for a complete understanding.

Additionally, the mixed-methodology addresses two possibly competing needs for depth and breadth in this analysis of the study. Quantitative methods give a wide-angle view of what is happening and trends that can apply to the broad population, but do not exactly interpret in detail why it happened; whereas qualitative approaches dig into the theory behind learner experiences, feelings (beliefs), across wider populations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The blend of these two approaches is particularly relevant to the research questions raised in this study, which intends not only to investigate (quantitative) how far cooperative learning contributes in providing an influence on speaking skills but also what that impact means(qualitative). Such a dual approach is necessary to establish an understanding of measurement outcomes and possible contextual influences on these outcomes (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010).

In the context of this study, which investigates the role of cooperative learning strategies in enhancing speaking skills among grade 8 ESL learners of a school in Lahore, the mixed methodology is particularly applicable. Since cooperative learning is a complex social activity in which quantitative measures (e.g., L2 proficiency gains) provide only part of the picture, there was a need to complement outcomes by revealing processes shared across teachers and learners. The use of a mixed-methods design allowed the study to systematically tackle research combining the statistical rigor of quantitative analysis with the in-depth exploration of qualitative inquiry. Not only does this strategy give an insight into the educational processes at work in a better way but also provides some implications for both teachers and policymakers (Bryman, 2016).

3.3 Research Approach

The methodological approaches used in this study are descriptive and thematic, reflecting a mixed methods design with both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Researchers may use the descriptive approach in their research, a term that refers to an organising strategy or methodological framework employed by researchers for describing (narrative) and summarising (numerical) the characteristics of a dataset but not manipulating variables looking for cause-and-effect relationships among them (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It attempts to provide a comprehensive overview of the data through elaborate descriptions, numerical summaries, and visuals that analysts can utilise to accurately exhibit patterns, trends & distribution (Field, 2018). The value of the descriptive approach is that it can provide simple and readable narratives around a study issue facilitating the achievement of a superior understanding of the fact or context (Neuman, 2014). The descriptive method tries to offer an exhaustive and complete representation of the results by showing characteristics and trends related to identified themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The analysis plan is descriptive

which includes an overview of data, data visualisation, and descriptive statistics for the quantitative part (Student Questionnaire) by describing the data through pie charts is an important data visualisation aid that allows the presentation of quantitative information in a better readable & interpretable way.

Thematic analysis is a qualitative research approach to analysing and reporting patterns or themes in data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is different from simple identifying and describing of data and encompasses the ability to explain the implication of identified themes within a given context. This method is particularly applicable while working with qualitative data such as interviews or any response format wherein the researcher searches for recurring themes to build a narrative around them. This procedure involves coding data, and sorting codes into themes which after being summarised will give a narrative representation of the findings. Using thematic analysis, this study aimed to reveal detailed and complex insights into how cooperative learning might foster speaking skills by uncovering both the in-depth views of teacher feedback processes as well as experiences.

It is comprehensive to establish a good perspective of the research problem by combining descriptive and thematic approaches using mixed methods. It combines quantitative and qualitative data to provide a more complete view of the phenomena studied. While quantitative methods give breadth through statistical analysis and visualisation, qualitative methods provide depth with detailed thematic exploration (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). This is particularly important within the confines of a case study aimed at one school and an identifiable cohort, as it affords in-depth insight into localised events capturing experiences and outcomes (Burns & Grove, 2010). By blending quantitative and qualitative descriptive and thematic analyses, a comprehensive research picture is presented which increases its validation.

3.4 Research Design and Procedure

Research design is key to any research study because the words suggest a plan for what has been planned and how it will be implemented (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It lays out how data will be collected and analysed succinctly, serving as a guideline for those who want to conduct research. A well-structured research design forms the foundation in terms of addressing the research questions and fulfilling its objectives by outlining a systematic process for data collection. A case study design was used in this research focusing on a private school's three branches located in Lahore; to gain an in-depth understanding of the impact of cooperative learning on grade-8 ESL learners (Yin, 2018). Research design is important because it ensures the trustworthiness or validity of the research findings and structures all aspects of the process from participant selection to data analysis and interpretation (Robson, 2002).

Case study design is particularly useful in educational research because it permits an intensive and holistic examination of complex phenomena within a real-life setting (Stake, 1995). This research presents a case study that offers an in-depth understanding of how one school and its three branches applied the principles of cooperative learning strategies and their impacts on speaking capabilities among 8th-grade ESL learners. This is perhaps the most important reason for adopting case study methodology as it allows researchers to explore educational practices within a specific setting, including all the challenges that this entails. This research employs a case study design to find out the impact of cooperative learning strategies on the speaking skills of 8th-grade students in three branches of the same school. Cooperative learning strategies are already being used in that school and students often learn through group activities. This study found out the specific difficulties, hurdles, and barriers faced by students

working cooperatively together, so teachers can consider how they might be able to assist such activities in the future (Merriam, 1998).

To meet the objectives and answer the research questions, the study was done using two tools simultaneously: a quantitative student questionnaire administered to grade-8 students and a qualitative semi-structured interview conducted with grade-8 English teachers over a period of two weeks. The simultaneous approach allowed for a comprehensive examination of the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies, the challenges encountered by learners, and the role of teachers, presenting a complete view of the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Combining both the quantitative and qualitative data makes the study holistic, which is useful in capturing the multivariate nature of the research questions as well as providing insight into how cooperative learning is affecting the selected school branches.

A short-term case study was appropriate for this research as it allowed for a close analysis of the cooperative learning model already implemented in the natural environment while avoiding the experimental intervention over a long period. Since cooperative learning strategies were already being employed in the school the focus was not on the quantitative changes over a period of time through pre and post-tests. As noted by Yin (2018), case studies are suitable for examining rich and real-life contextual phenomena within their natural settings especially when the primary interest is to establish a probe into processes, relationships, and subjective perception. In this case, the two weeks were adequate to gain relevant information as to the impact of cooperative learning, and problems that practicing teachers and learners face among other things without the need for an extensive intervention. Besides this, the features of this study correlate with Stake's (1995), notion that case studies are valuable in describing certain educational practices since they concentrate on a certain phenomenon under investigation during a certain period in the process of forming the overall picture, which makes

it possible to analyse how cooperative learning impacts the speaking skills in a given time frame.

3.5 Research Tools

Research tools help in the systematic collection, measurement, and analysis of data in a research study. These tools can be surveys, interviews, and, observation tests that fit with the requirement and purpose of a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Each tool has its own role in the data collection process so that researchers get sufficient information to answer their research questions and hypotheses. For instance, questionnaires are intended to gather data quantitatively through the selected population sample that allows for statistical treatment of trends and patterns (Dillman et al., 2014). By contrast, a semi-structured interview yields qualitative data by allowing the participants to describe their perspectives and experiences more elaborately which results in the researcher's understanding of the themes (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The use of adequate research instruments for the selected methodology is necessary to ensure that the collected data are relevant, reliable, and valid – increasing quality and validity in general of its conclusions.

In terms of research, the role of instruments is to help make data collection systematic and objective which is required to be able to draw accurate conclusions and make evidence-based decisions (Fink, 2017). In other words, research tools help researchers to get their research questions and hypotheses ready to use — useful instruments that assist in turning the abstract into something that can be measured (Merriam, 1998). In addition, the use of varied research tools helps to make a thorough exploration of the research problem in different ways from a multivariate perspective and gives a logical and legitimate explanation of the problem (Yegidis, 2018). The careful selection of research tools guarantees that data is collected in a way that is rigorous and adaptable. It should also support the achievement of research goals

and the validity of the findings. The research tools used in this study were student questionnaires and a semi-structured interview with the teachers.

3.6 Student Questionnaire

The instrument employed in this study a student questionnaire, is a quantitative tool that was developed to obtain quantitative data from the grade 8 students about their learning experiences based on cooperative learning strategies. Questionnaires are one of the most effective ways of collecting data since they enable the researcher to gather data from many respondents within a short period and in a much organised manner (Dillman et al., 2014). This helps in collecting standard and measurable data, and this makes it easier to establish the various patterns and the different trends as observed (Fink, 2017). The student questionnaire was completed by three sections of 8th-grade students in the three branches of the school. The questionnaire contained 35 statements under 11 thematic categories and Google Forms was used to administer the questionnaire. The use of a questionnaire aimed at identifying students' attitudes toward cooperative learning and its effects on their speaking skills to give an overall understanding of the challenges and opportunities (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Through using this tool the researcher was able to collect quantitative data that can be used in the evaluation of the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies.

3.6.1 Questionnaire pilot test

A questionnaire pilot testing was done with a small sample of 15 participants to identify any potential issues with the question statements and the structure. It helped to ensure that the questionnaire was clear, valid, and reliable and there were no ambiguous statements. It was made sure that the statements were relevant to the research objectives.

3.6.2 Validity and reliability of the quantitative questionnaire

The terms, validity, and reliability are important for any type of research because accuracy in the measuring tools can seriously affect the outcome of research, especially the quantitative type of research. In a study, validity is defined as the extent to which a particular research instrument captures the elements it claims to measure as postulated by Creswell and Creswell (2018). In this research, the questionnaire contained 35 statements categorised into 11 themes such as engagement and participation, motivational speaking, skill improvement, and teachers' support. These themes were determined through an extensive literature review process and grounded within the study aims, particularly to generate insights into cooperative learning in speaking skills enhancement among grade 8 ESL learners. The statements were written to provide an accurate representation of all relevant components of the research focus, with wording and terminology reviewed by experts in the field and the supervisor of this research (Polit & Beck, 2017). Secondly, the face and content validity of questionnaires was conducted using piloting where few amendments were suggested after pre-testing by the research supervisor.

On the other hand, reliability focuses on how relatively constant or stable is any research instrument (Trochim, 2020). The reliability of the instrument was tested with a sample size (of 15) and expert opinion from the supervisor (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Additionally, the utilisation of Google Forms for the data collection was beneficial in offering consistent administration and thus increasing reliability as well. The study obtained strong reliability and validity by categorising the items within the questionnaire based on theoretical themes.

3.6.3 Population of the study

The population of this study for the questionnaire focused on 8th-grade students enrolled at the Unique School System in Lahore, Pakistan. Three branches of this school were part of this research study. They were the Unique Junior High School for Girls and Boys in West Wood Colony, the Unique School and Academy Nawab Town Campus, and the Unique Boys and Girls High School & Unique Science Academy. This study involved a total of 250 students across these three branches, comprising both boys and girls, thereby representing a co-educational setting. From each branch, three sections (A, B, and, C) of 8th-grade students participated, with an age range of 12 to 15 years. From the first branch, Unique Junior High School for Girls and Boys in West Wood Colony, a total of 83 students participated, with 35 girls and 48 boys. The second branch, Unique School and Academy Nawab Town Campus involved 86 students, including 46 girls and 40 boys. The third branch, Unique Boys and Girls High School & Unique Science Academy participated with 81 students, out of which 34 were girls and 47 boys. This diverse population within a co-education setting provided a rich context for exploring the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in enhancing speaking skills among ESL learners, considering variations in gender, academic environment, and branch-specific dynamics.

3.6.4 Sampling techniques used for quantitative sample

A sampling technique is the process through which a researcher identifies and chooses a limited number of respondents from a larger population to accomplish his or her research objectives. Essentially, the sample plays a critical function in research as it has a direct bearing on the validity of the results and the capacity to generalise the study findings (Etikan et al., 2016). The correct choice of sampling technique ensures that the sample is truly indicative of the population and allows the researchers to make valid conclusions. The techniques used in

sampling can be categorised as either probability or non-probability sampling. Purposive and convenience sampling which are types of non-probability sampling is recommended when one is interested in particular characteristics in the population being studied or when the participants are easily accessible (Palinkas et al., 2015).

For this study, the researcher used the convenience sampling method. This was done because the researcher was in a position to access these school branches hence making it easier and faster to conduct the assessment. That is why convenience sampling, although is deemed less stringent as compared to others, should be used in cases where the population is easily accessible and closely related to the topic under investigation (Etikan et al., 2016). In this study, the researcher was able to get easy access to the schools therefore, it was logical to use a population sample that was not only accessible but also served the intended research purpose.

3.7 Semi-Structured Interviews

Based on the research questions, the qualitative data collection instrument adopted for this study was semi-structured interviews with the teachers. This is a method where interviews with broad questions are used to understand the participants' views and experiences of events and issues (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Semi-structured interviews are especially important in educational research as they allow the collection of detailed data that supports an interpretation of phenomena and contexts (Merriam, 1998). For this research, six teachers of English teaching 8th grade in the three branches of the school were considered for an interview to seek more information concerning their classroom strategies and perception of the utilisation of the cooperative learning methods and the means that can be employed to support these practices (Cohen et al., 2018). Some of the advantages of using the semi-structured interviews were that the interviewee had the opportunity to expand on different aspects of CL in a free and natural

way, it provided flexibility, and the researcher was also able to ask follow-up questions, which enhanced the overall quality and comprehensiveness of the qualitative data collected.

3.7.1 Validity and reliability of the semi-structured teacher interview

In the context of qualitative research, such as semi-structured interviews, validity, and reliability are essential to ensure that findings accurately reflect respondents' experiences and are consistent and replicable. This study employed semi-structured interviews with English teachers and open-ended questions to explore 11 distinct themes. While open-ended interviews do not offer generalisable results, their value is in allowing for a more thorough examination of the teachers' experiences and perceptions, resulting in greater depth and richness of data than might be obtained through quantitative research alone (Stebbins, 2001). The use of open-ended questions encourages elaboration from participants which makes it possible to delve deeper into how cooperative learning strategies may influence speaking proficiency with 8th-grade ESL students. Content validity was maximised given that the questions were developed from knowledge of the literature, which identified themes central to the overall research objectives and questions. Also, reliability was increased by having a standard interview protocol with each participant but still using both focuses while allowing the flexibility for participants to elaborate (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The questions were later evaluated by the research supervisor for validity.

Reliability in qualitative interviews is essentially concerned with the validity and consistency of that data. Reliability in this study was established by following the standard operation procedure in the implementation of the interviews within three branches of the same school. There was the same set of questions asked in each interview (making it a consistent framework) but allowing for human variance according to personal experiences. This helped to increase the credibility of the analysis and the researcher also wrote handwritten notes which

were then used during data coding. The reliability was further enhanced by the application of open-ended questions framed within specific pre-defined themes (teacher facilitation, interaction/social, and group dynamics) to ensure interviews remained focused on the areas of interest (Patton, 2015). All of these factors combined to make the semi-structured interviews an effective and reliable instrument for examining teachers' beliefs on the use of cooperative learning strategies in promoting speaking development among ESL learners.

3.7.2 Interview guide analysis

An interview guide is typical for semi-structured interviews, as it helps the interviewer to follow the general strategy, and the general and particular questions, and at the same time has the possibility for the interviewer to change aspects/adapt in accordance with the replies (Kallio et al., 2016). It also guarantees that the questions are geared towards the objectives of the research and at the same time gives the participants the freedom to express themselves further than when given a preset format to follow.

The interview guide for this study was designed to explore the challenges, benefits, and impact of cooperative learning on the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners. It combines background questions to understand teachers' profiles with targeted questions based on the study's 11 key themes, ranging from student engagement and participation to teacher support and facilitation. By framing the interviews around specific themes, the guide allowed for in-depth exploration while ensuring that responses remained relevant to the study's objectives and research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The guide was structured to prompt critical reflection from the teachers, enabling a comprehensive understanding of how cooperative learning strategies are implemented and observed in the classroom. Open-ended questions encourage detailed responses, fostering a richer exploration of the contextual factors and

classroom dynamics that influence 8th-grade students' speaking development in a cooperative setting of the Unique School System.

Thematic identification from these interviews entailed systematically marking and sorting the responses according to pre-determined themes. This is in line with that of Braun & Clarke (2006); the theme analysis method, which captures qualitative data patterns and trends effectively. Themes were developed from the literature and iteratively refined to represent all aspects covered by the research objectives. Given the categorisation of the data based on themes, a thematic analysis provided a detailed and comprehensive overview of how teachers perceived language accuracy, social interaction, and critical thinking development. This analysis aimed to identify patterns in teacher feedback and also subtler differences between teachers that provided a detailed view of how cooperative learning affects ESL learners across different classroom contexts.

3.7.3 Sample population of teachers

The sample population for this study consisted of six English teachers who are teaching English to grade 8 students. Two teachers were selected from each branch of the three branches of the Unique School System in Lahore; Unique Junior High School for Girls and Boys, West Wood Colony; Unique School and Academy, Nawab Town Campus; and Unique Boys and Girls High School & Unique Science Academy. All teachers were females and represented a diverse range of experience levels from novice to veteran educators. Experienced teachers bring insights based on long-term observation and established practices, while novice teachers may introduce fresh perspectives and highlight contemporary challenges in implementing cooperative learning strategies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This diversity allowed the research to capture a broad spectrum of teaching approaches, challenges, and successes, thereby enriching the findings. More seasoned teachers might be employing successful cooperative

learning strategies and know how to manage problem areas in the ESL classroom, while novice teachers are still negotiating these dynamics, presenting a new perspective (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Finally, obtaining data from teachers who have different levels of experience increases the validity or improves confidence in the interpretations made from the data by being able to explain a greater percentage of variation than can be explained through an analysis of results using only quantitative methods. The multiple voices enhance the understanding of how teaching and learning are considered conceptually while providing a window into the contextualising of cooperative learning strategies which enables greater discourse across different samples.

3.7.4 Sampling techniques for teacher selection

The researcher employed the convenient sampling technique to select the teachers for this study. These teachers were available and willing to participate; therefore, a convenient sample of participants was used. These educators were also directly accessible to the researcher making interviews quite convenient and efficient, which facilitated the data collection process as well. Convenience sampling is useful when the researcher wants to obtain information from readily available subjects who fit the study's criteria (Etikan et al., 2016). This method of sampling was selected to ensure that the teachers who participated in this study were relevant to the research goals and easily available, allowing the research to be conducted effectively within the given timeframe and resources.

3.8 Data Collection Process

Data collection is a prerequisite for any research as it is the backbone of any study. This includes data collection processes through various research techniques and tools followed by interpretation and analysis of it for bringing insightful results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data collection is perhaps the most important component; as it creates the empirical proof

needed to support findings and continue research growth. The choice of data collection methods and tools depends on the nature of the study/study object and what type of information is needed (Fink, 2017).

Well-designed data collection methods are one way to ensure that the data being collected is accurate, reliable, and relevant – which is critical for producing valid conclusions or making useful decisions (Yegidis 2018). Thus, it is imperative to dedicate sufficient time and resources to gathering quality data which is essential for high-quality research output (Kabir, 2016). According to Olsen (2012), even if a research agenda is planned appropriately, the validity of a study depends on the correct execution of data collection techniques. The student questionnaire and the semi-structured teacher interviews were conducted at the same time during a two-week period. This process consisted of the administration of a student questionnaire to that section of 8th-grade students followed by interviews with their English teachers. This sequence remained consistent across the three branches where the research was carried out. The systematic nature and structured approach in data collection enabled the researcher to compare student responses with teacher interviews to make coherent comparisons (Yegidis, 2018). This method of collecting data proved to be efficient and enabled the merger of both quantitative (data) as well as qualitative (findings) to be used in an integrated way for deep analysis.

3.9 Data Collection

Data for this study was collected during two weeks, using both online and face-to-face methods to capture the full breadth of the research population. The primary instrument employed was a quantitative tool in the form of a Google Forms questionnaire, which was distributed among the 8th-grade student population at three branches of the Unique School System in Lahore. The researcher visited each branch to observe and help instruct students on

how to complete the forms, as well as be available for any questions. Google Forms circulated via WhatsApp made the questionnaire accessible and convenient for the students leading to high levels of response rate (Wright, 2005). The combination of both physical visitation and digital dissemination; ensured that the data-collection process was smooth and completed within the specific timeframe.

Following the completion of the student questionnaires, from each section, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the English teachers from that section. The semi-structured interviews served as the secondary tool for data collection. Interviews were held after students filled out their questionnaires to maintain a clear sequence and avoid any influence of teacher responses on student perceptions. The sequence was maintained to collect data over all the branches. Interviews with two English teachers, teaching grade-8 at each branch were conducted to learn more about the difficulties experienced by the students, collaborative learning as a support for oral expression skills, and strategies implemented in the classroom. Face-to-face interviews also enabled the researcher to observe the non-verbal cues and build rapport which contributed to more open in-depth and reflective conversations (Opdenakker, 2006). The sequential approach of first collecting data from students and then teacher interviews was critical to achieving the triangulation that allowed the researcher to develop a richer understanding of issues and provided a comprehensive analysis of the research objectives.

3.10 Data Analysis

Systematic and structured analysis of data was performed from both quantitative questionnaires and qualitative semi-structured interviews to find the significant results in this study. The purpose of the study was to determine if cooperative learning strategies could improve the English-speaking ability of 8th-grade ESL learners. It was conducted through

descriptive analysis of the questionnaire data and thematic analysis of the interview data. It also integrated the outcomes from both analysis methods to explore the concordance or discordance in concepts, giving a full picture of the research questions.

The analysis of the questionnaire data involved descriptive statistical techniques to provide an overview of the responses collected from the 250 students. Descriptive analysis is a fundamental step in quantitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For this study, the Google Forms platform automatically generated initial descriptive statistics in the form of percentages visually represented through pie charts. The findings were further consolidated by taking out the mean score for each statement of the student questionnaire. This analysis helped to identify the students' perceptions regarding various themes such as engagement, participation, motivation, and speaking skill development. Each of the 35 statements, grouped under 11 themes, was analysed in terms of the overall trends and showed visual data through pie charts and percentages giving a clear picture of how cooperative learning was perceived by the participants and how it impacted different aspects of their English language speaking skills.

The qualitative portion of this study is based on semi-structured interview responses from teachers, presented in a framework analysis using thematic analysis, described as a method that identifies, analyses, and reports patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Interviews: The interviews included open-ended questions corresponding to the 11 themes of the student questionnaire. These were transcribed and color-coded according to common themes. The coding process included a stepwise inductive methodology with constant revision and refining against themes. It was found that thematic analysis is more appropriate here to provide a detailed and nuanced exploration of teachers' perspectives to uncover not only how cooperative learning strategies are implemented in language teaching classrooms, but also the specific problems of improving productive speaking at schools.

A critical aspect of the data analysis was the comparison of findings from both the quantitative and qualitative phases. This was done through a triangulation process whereby the commonality and divergence of themes across the two data sets were explored. These findings were integrated to encourage and construct a more comprehensive perspective considering the subjective experiences of teachers with the patterns uncovered by student responses (Flick, 2018).

Finally, this study was systematic in nature, and it provides a robust data analysis method ensuring internal reliability. For the quantitative phase, reliability was evaluated using pilot testing and through expert review where the supervisor reviewed the questionnaire. Feedback from the supervisor was collected with respect to the content, relevance, and clarity of the items, and accordingly, modifications were made.

The reliability of the qualitative data was ensured by techniques such as member checking, where the researcher presented the responses to participants for them to assess accuracy and consistency (Nowell et al., 2017). The supervisor also reviewed it. The conjunctive process of descriptive and thematic analysis underpinned the credibility of findings, combined with rigorous cross-checking to ensure that the findings are credible and contextually relevant.

3.11 Trustworthiness of the Study

Trustworthiness in research seeks to understand the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the findings from a study to ensure authenticity or that the data collected reflects the true picture (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility refers to how true the data is and how well the findings reflect what participants thought. Transferability is the generalisation and applicability

of results to other contexts. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), dependability is a corollary to stability and reliability and is the consistency of the research process over time whereas confirmability is the objectivity and neutrality of the research findings.

In this study, trustworthiness was ensured through multiple strategies, including the use of two different data collection methods and triangulation. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data sources, through the student questionnaires and semi-structured teacher interviews, enhanced the credibility of the findings by providing a more comprehensive view of the research problem. Data triangulation, involving the use of multiple data sources, methods, or researchers, allows for cross-verification of results, reducing the likelihood of bias and increasing the validity of the study (Denzin, 2012). By analysing questionnaire responses and interview data, the study was able to corroborate findings, thereby reinforcing the robustness of the results and providing a more nuanced understanding of the impact of cooperative learning on ESL students' speaking skills.

The documentation and transparency in the research process, on the other hand, supported the dependability and confirmability of this study. Detailed records of data collection procedures, including the administration of questionnaires via Google Forms and the scheduling of teacher interviews, were maintained. This documentation provides an audit trail that others can follow to determine the validity of the inquiry process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Finally, combining thematic analysis of the interview data and descriptive statistics calculation of questionnaire responses provided a comprehensive approach to interpreting data ensuring that results are grounded in the data rather than researcher bias. Together, these strategies improved the rigor of the study; hence the conclusions are well grounded in the data and ensure the trustworthiness of the study.

3.12 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

3.12.1 Limitation of the study

Despite the positive results of this study on understanding the practicality of cooperative learning strategies in enhancing the speaking abilities of grade 8 ESL learners, it is essential to consider the limitations of this study. First, the study is limited to a single private school in Lahore, Pakistan which is Unique School System including its three campuses only. This limited geographic and institutional coverage means that the findings cannot be generalised to different educational settings or other regions. Studies done in other contexts or with a larger and more varied sample may produce contrary findings and, therefore, the reliability of the study findings might be affected (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Another limitation is in method of sample selection that was employed in the research study. Both students and teachers participated in the study and convenient sampling was used to recruit the participants. Despite these methods enabling meaningful and efficient collection of data regarding the accessible population, they bring in systematic bias. The use of convenience sampling may create selection bias; thus, the sample may not be a good representation of all the ESL teachers' and students' experiences, feelings, or perceptions toward classroom practices (Patton, 2015). Therefore, convenience sampling, although useful, may at times lead to a biased sample which may impact the validity of the study (Trochim, 2020). Also, the study is restricted by the data collected from the questionnaires of students and interviews of teachers, where some data may reveal self-bias. Self-reported data are generally prone to social desirability bias where respondents will provide data that is perceived as more appropriate than the real data (Paulhus, 2002). This could lead to failure in the obtainment of accurate data and hence influence the results. Despite using two procedures of data collection to reduce the effects of this problem, the assessment of data has its inherent limitations due to self-reporting which must be taken into consideration while analysing the research findings.

In addition, the use of descriptive and thematic analysis methods for data analysis in this study also leaves it with a specific set of limitations. While descriptive statistics can cover broad aspects of data they cannot reveal the details of intricate patterns and interrelationships that exist in the data (Field, 2018). In a similar regard, thematic analysis is effective in enabling the researcher to analyse qualitative data as far as it helps in identifying patterns and themes but can be equally subjective, and inevitably sensitive to the researcher's perception and interpretation, which may in turn result in variability in the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These limitations have shown the need to be very careful in interpreting results and looking at other methodologies for use in future research.

3.12.2 Delimitations of the study

This research is a short-term case study measuring the role of cooperative learning strategies to improve 8th-grade ESL students' speaking skills. There were a few intentional decisions made in carrying out this research that led to some objective boundaries on how far this research could extend. These delimitations were necessary to provide a more in-depth analysis within certain boundaries and address the limitations of time, resources, data availability, and research design.

First, the findings of this study can only be generalised to a single private school system, the Unique School System located in Lahore, Pakistan, and data was collected from three branches of the school. This allows for a focused exploration of the phenomenon with greater depth and detail within an individual institutional context. By limiting the research to just one specific school system the researcher not only narrowed the focus but it allowed for a more focused look at the kind of cooperative learning strategies that teachers used and their impact on students speaking skills in that setting (Yin, 2018). This additionally made it possible to do

a manageable investigation within the time constraints and resources, as broadening of focus would have necessitated even greater resources, logistical arrangements, and organisation.

Second, is that the study focused on eighth-grade students and English teachers in these branches. A total of 250 boys and girls and six English teachers took part in the study. This was done deliberately because this is the time when language learners are supposed to move from speaking very basic English to more complex and advanced English communication skills. The researcher chose this particular age group because of the importance of middle school learning and ways in which cooperative learning may impact English language learners at a critical age level where gains must be made to be able to develop language proficiency within ESL environments (Ellis, 2008). This choice to only target 8th-grade learners provided an in-depth insight into the stages of learning development alongside the academic needs within the framework of cooperative learning.

Additionally, this study used convenience sampling where the researcher was able to select participants according to convenience and access. Although this sampling method does have its own set of limitations, it was chosen purposively due to the pragmatic needs of the study in terms of time and access to participants. Despite its potential for bias, convenience sampling allowed the researcher to gather a large sample within a short time frame (Marshall, 1996) This was also appropriate given the case study itself was relatively short-term, making it feasible to collect data meaningfully within the confines of the time and resources available for this.

Furthermore, the research only examined students' speaking skills. Even though the competency and proficiency of other skills in language like reading, writing, or listening is also instrumental to ESL students, from the perspective of language learners, speaking seems to be the most challenging to master and ESL students often struggle with it (Brown & Yule, 1983).

Focusing on this stage in learning and this specific skill of a new language, allowed clear parameters to be identified and paved the way for a targeted examination of cooperative learning's effectiveness in the domain of ESL education.

Finally, the research tools included student questionnaires and a semi-structured interview with teachers. The selection of these tools was driven by the need for both quantitative and qualitative data to identify the extent to which cooperative learning strategies change student speaking skills and the role of teacher facilitation. The combined use of these methods provided triangulation, albeit narrow in scope, strengthens the trustworthiness, validity, and reliability of the results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.13 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are basic elements that inform research activities to be carried out in such a manner that they respect the rights, dignity, and welfare of study participants (Israel, 2015). These aspects are very important to maintain the rigors of research and prevent subjects from coming under any harm. The primary moral principles are informed assent, privacy, and confidentiality of data, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw whenever they want (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Ethical standards, moreover, mandate that investigators do not commit fraud, deceit, coercion, or exploitation. These challenges may induce ethical considerations, and this is especially obvious in educational research involving students, teachers, or educational institutions, who due to power dynamics are particularly exposed and vulnerable to unethical influences in the sensitive context of educational settings.

During this research, several ethical steps have been meticulously followed to maintain the ethical stance of the study and ensure participant protection. In the first place, informed consent was secured from the students and teachers who were part of this study. Parental

consent was taken since the students were less than 18 years old. All participants were made to understand the purpose, procedures, potential benefits or risks of the study, and what was expected of them (BERA, 2018). Furthermore, the participants were all told they had a right to change their minds and withdraw at any stage during this study without any negative consequences. By choosing to participate voluntarily it was ensured that all participants were genuinely taking part of their own will, removing any sense of coercion, a particular problem within schools where there is an implicit pressure to conform.

The principles of confidentiality and anonymity were strictly observed throughout the research. No personal information in the form of names or any specific data was released and claimed within reports to avoid individual identification (Bryman, 2016) All data, such as questionnaire responses and interview notes, was securely stored and only available to the researcher and supervisor ensuring their privacy (Wiles, 2012). The relevant bodies with the school system were contacted and ethical approval was obtained before the study commenced in accordance with institutional guidelines. All of these ensure the findings are reported in a balanced, unbiased perspective considering all participants involved without misrepresentation. These ethical boundaries were vital not only to the integrity of the research but also for building and preserving a relationship of trust and respect between the researcher and the participants.

3.14 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlines the research methods used in this study for investigating cooperative learning and its effects on the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners at the Unique School System, Lahore, Pakistan. This chapter outlines the research paradigm, pragmatism, and research design, case study approach with particular emphasis on its appropriateness for a detailed investigation of one institution through its three different

branches. The study employed quantitative and qualitative nature to enable the process of obtaining rich detailed data for a deeper understanding of the research problem. A quantitative approach was used to measure students' engagement, motivation, and development in speaking skills by employing a 35 statements-structured questionnaire for 250 Grade-8 pupils across the three branches.

Statistical analysis was performed on this data: descriptive statistics and visual data exploration as well as an overview of trends. In parallel, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 6 English teachers of those branches, and a qualitative thematic analysis was performed to explore teaching practices and related themes and cooperative learning influences. This chapter details the data collection procedure whereby student questionnaires were administered on WhatsApp through Google Forms subsequently leading to teacher interviews in the school. All aspects of the study are in adherence to ethical standards for informed consent, anonymity, and voluntary participation. Finally, the chapter considers the study limitations as the study was conducted in a restricted geographical scope, with potential biases in sampling biases and self-reported data. Triangulation using different sources of data and methods in the present study enhanced the trustworthiness thus reinforcing the validity of findings. The methods and procedures employed for investigating the research questions are described with sufficient clarity in this chapter, thus establishing the reliability of a framework focusing on two distinct types of analysis to evaluate cooperative learning's efficacy in enhancing ESL speaking outcomes.

CHAPTER 4

RESULT AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

Chapter four presents the findings of the study aimed to determine the effect of using cooperative learning strategies on the speaking ability of 8th-grade ESL students. The data was gathered quantitatively through student questionnaires and qualitatively through structured teacher interviews on different aspects including engagement, motivation, critical thinking, confidence, and speaking skills in cooperative learning among others. Findings are described in two key sections: the descriptive analysis of students' questionnaire responses seeking to provide a statistical view of students' perceptions and experiences based on the quantitative data, and the thematic analysis of teacher interviews providing details of how cooperative learning strategies were practiced and its observed effects. The chapter looks forward to explaining how the findings play a role in fulfilling the research objectives and questions and offers ample evidence showing its effectiveness in developing ESL learners' speaking skills.

4.2 Student Questionnaire

The 35-statements-based student questionnaire was designed in a systematic way to capture the attitudes, challenges, and perceptions of 8th-grade ESL learners regarding the role of cooperative learning in building their speaking skills. The questionnaire developed employed a five Likert scale response where respondents stated their level of agreement from 'strongly agree,' (5) to 'strongly disagree,' (1). This scale allowed the analysis of the ratio of consensus within students as far as how cooperative learning affected their speaking skills. For a statement, a majority selection of 5 or 4 meant that they perceived cooperative learning to be effective and agreed with the statement while 2 or 1 meant that students felt that cooperative learning was less beneficial in such areas. Through this data, the questionnaire gave a closer

view of how the cooperative learning strategies boosted their speaking skills and the insights into challenges and barriers the students have to face when learning in an ESL classroom.

4.2.1 Quantitative data analysis

For the quantitative research part, pie charts are employed to indicate the percentage distribution of responses on the thirty-five statements from the student questionnaire. Pie charts are useful in displaying the proportions and patterns of the data in a more comprehensible way to make conclusions regarding different items easier (De Vaus, 2014). This method in particular is appropriate for descriptive analysis since it makes it easier to present data. Furthermore, the use of pie charts also supports the qualitative data obtained through semi-structured interviews of teachers with a numerical counterpart. Both techniques and approaches compare the effects of cooperative learning on the development of speaking, where pie charts give the overall statistical analysis and the thematic analysis provides the additional level of interpretative inflection (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Altogether these approaches present a holistic view of a phenomenon under study, which is in line with the pragmatic paradigm embraced by this study.

4.2.2 Results and findings of the student questionnaire
Theme 1: Engagement and Participation

Analysis of Statement 1

I actively participate in group discussions during cooperative learning sessions.

In the figure below the data shows that a very high percentage of the respondents which is 86.7% either agree 61. 7% or strongly agree 25% with the statement that they fully engage themselves in group discussions during the cooperative learning sessions. A smaller proportion 7.7% remained neutral while only 2.8% disagreed and another 2.8% strongly disagreed with the statement. The high percentage of agreement shows that cooperative learning sessions enhance motivation to ensure the student's active participation in discussions. The mean frequency of this statement is 4.03 showing that respondents agree with the statement.

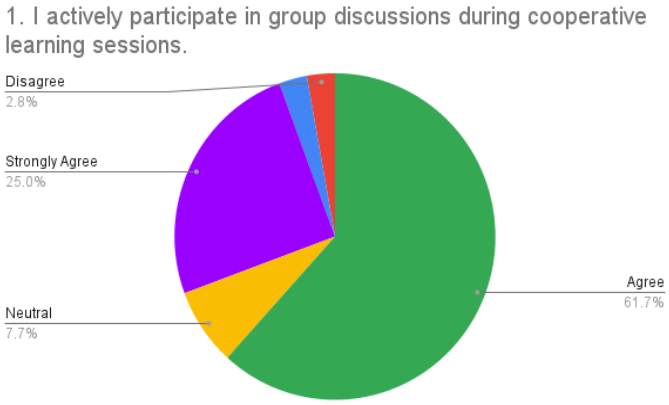


Figure:4.1

Analysis of Statement 2

Cooperative learning activities keep me engaged throughout the lesson.

The data in the figure below shows that the majority of respondents 62.2% agree and 25.3% strongly agree, that cooperative learning activities effectively sustain their engagement throughout their lessons. This indicates that the majority of students find cooperative learning sessions to be engaging and conducive to maintaining their interest in the lesson. A smaller proportion, 8.4%, remain neutral, suggesting that while cooperative activities may sometimes be engaging, this effect is not similar for all students. Only 2.4% of students strongly disagree, and 1.6% disagree, indicating a small section of the student population does not experience increased engagement through these activities. The mean frequency for this statement is 4.06 showing that respondents believe that cooperative learning activities keep them engaged during the lessons.

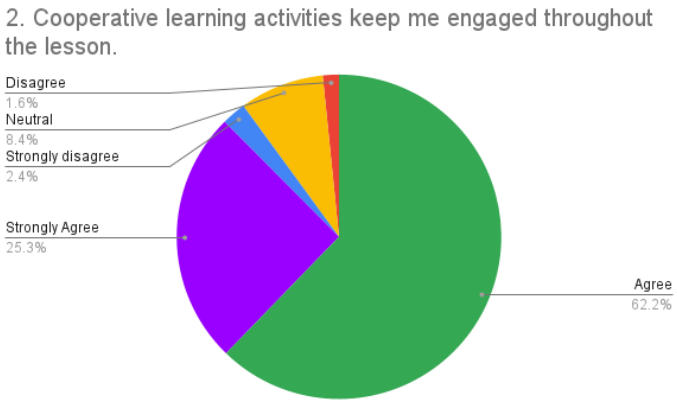


Figure:4.2

Analysis of Statement 3

I feel more comfortable speaking in English when working in a group.

The data in this figure indicates that 42.6% of respondents agree and 19.3% strongly agree that they feel more comfortable speaking in English when participating in group activities. This suggests that a significant portion of students experience increased comfort with English in a cooperative learning environment. 20.1% of students remained neutral, indicating that their comfort level may not be significantly influenced by group work. A noteworthy 14.1% disagree, and 4% strongly disagree, suggesting that a minority of students still find speaking English challenging in group settings, despite the cooperative learning approach. The mean score for this statement is 3.59 which is above neutral and closer to agree suggesting that on average students are comfortable speaking English in group settings.

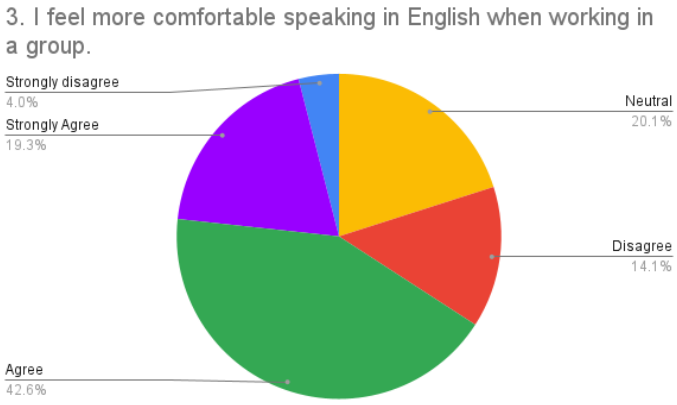


Figure:4.3

Theme 2: Motivation

Analysis of Statement 4

Cooperative learning motivates me to improve my speaking skills.

In the figure presented below the data shows that 57% of the participants agree and 30.9% strongly agree that cooperative learning motivates them to improve their speaking skills. This indicates a strong positive perception of the role of cooperative learning in fostering motivation for language improvement. 8% of students remained neutral, suggesting that their motivation might not be significantly impacted by group work. Only 2.8% of the students strongly disagree and 1.2% disagree showing that they do not find cooperative learning effective in motivating them to improve their speaking skills. The mean frequency for this statement is 4.12 showing that respondents agree to the statement.



Figure:4.4

Analysis of Statement 5

Cooperative learning encourages me to set personal goals for improving my speaking skills.

The data in the figure below indicates that 57.4% of the participants agree and 27.7% strongly agree that cooperative learning encourages them to set personal goals for improving their speaking skills. This suggests a positive influence of cooperative learning on goal-setting, which is critical for personal and academic growth. 9.2% of students remained neutral, implying that their experiences with cooperative learning may not significantly affect their goal-setting behavior. Additionally, 3.2% strongly disagree and 2.4% disagree, pointing to a small subset of students who do not find cooperative learning instrumental in setting personal improvement goals. The mean score is 4.04 indicating that the students believe cooperative learning encourages them to set personal goals for improving their speaking skills.

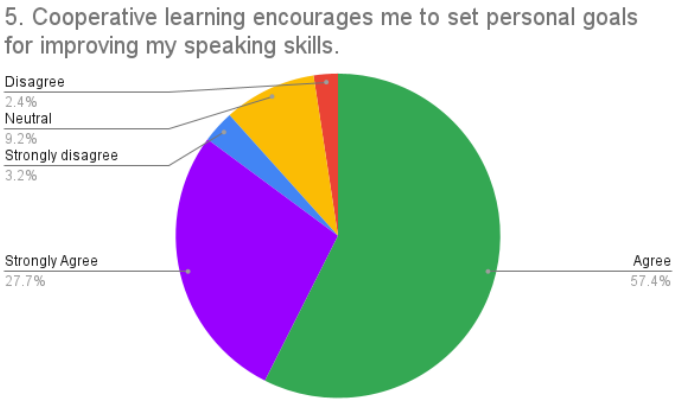


Figure:4.5

Analysis of Statement 6

Cooperative learning encourages me to take initiative in speaking tasks.

The result in the figure below shows that 59.8% of the participants agree and 19.3% strongly agree that cooperative learning encourages them to take initiative in speaking tasks. This finding suggests that cooperative learning creates an environment that prompts students to become more proactive in their speaking engagements. 13.7% of the students remained neutral, indicating that for some students, the impact of cooperative learning on their initiative may be less pronounced or variable. Meanwhile, 4% disagree and 3.2% strongly disagree, who do not perceive cooperative learning as a motivator for taking initiative in speaking tasks. The mean frequency is 3.88 indicating that generally students believe that cooperative learning encourages them to take initiative in speaking tasks.

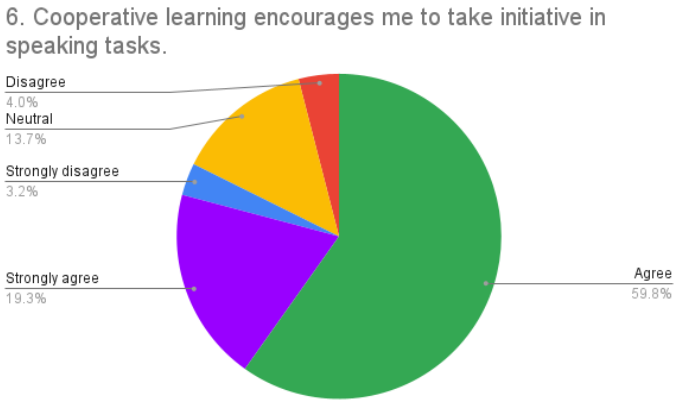


Figure:4.6

Theme 3: Speaking Skill Development: Language Accuracy, Fluency, Pronunciation, Intonation, and Linguistic Complexity

Analysis of Statement 7

Group work helps me improve the accuracy of my spoken English.

The result in the figure below shows that 52.2% of students agree and 26.9% strongly agree that group work improves the accuracy of their spoken English. In contrast, 13.7% remained neutral, which reflects varying experiences or perceptions of how group work impacts their linguistic precision. Meanwhile, 3.6% disagree and an equal percentage strongly disagree, representing a minority who do not find group work effective in improving their spoken English accuracy. The mean frequency score for this statement is 3.95 suggesting that a large number of students perceive group activities as helpful in refining their language accuracy.

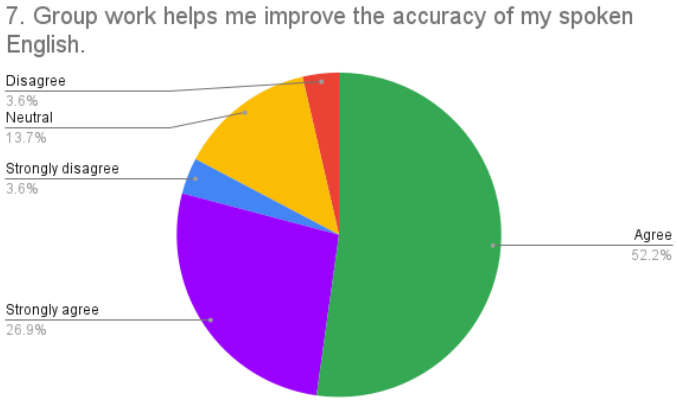


Figure:4.7

Analysis of Statement 8

Cooperative learning activities have enhanced my fluency in English speaking.

The data in the figure below indicates that 54.3% of the respondents agree and 25.9% strongly agree that cooperative learning activities have positively impacted their fluency in English speaking. However, 11.3% remained neutral, possibly indicating that while they may have experienced some benefits, the impact on their fluency is less pronounced or varies by individual. The 4.9% who disagree and the 3.6% who strongly disagree highlight a smaller segment of students who do not perceive a significant improvement in their fluency through cooperative learning activities. The mean score is 3.94 indicating that on average a significant majority of students recognise the role of cooperative learning in enhancing their fluency in speaking English.

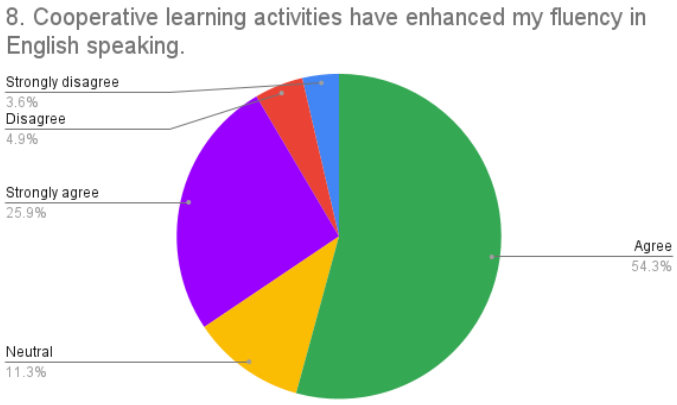


Figure:4.8

Analysis of Statement 9

I have improved my pronunciation through group discussions and activities.

The data in the figure below indicates that 48.2% of the participants agree and 28.5% strongly agree that group discussions and activities improved their pronunciation. This suggests that almost 77% of students perceive a positive impact on their pronunciation as a result of engaging in cooperative learning.13.3% remained neutral, 6.8% disagreed, and 3.2% strongly disagreed suggesting that a smaller portion of students do not see significant benefits in their pronunciation from such collaborative activities. The mean score for this statement is 3.92 indicating that students generally believe that group discussions play a role in improving their pronunciation.

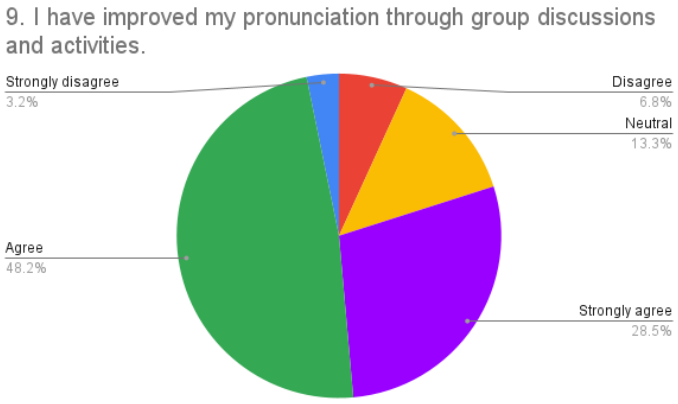


Figure:4.9

Analysis of Statement 10

Cooperative learning helps me focus on the correct intonation while speaking.

According to the data in the figure below, 50.4% of respondents agree and 23.8% strongly agree that cooperative learning aids them in focusing on correct intonation while speaking. This reflects a combined 74.2% of students who recognise the benefit of collaborative activities

in enhancing their intonation skills. The 16.1% who remained neutral, suggest that their experience with cooperative learning regarding intonation is less pronounced or inconsistent. Meanwhile, 5.6% disagree and 4% strongly disagree indicating that a minority of students do not perceive significant benefits from cooperative learning activities in this area. The mean frequency is 3.84 indicating that generally respondents agree that cooperative learning helps them to focus on the correct intonation while speaking.

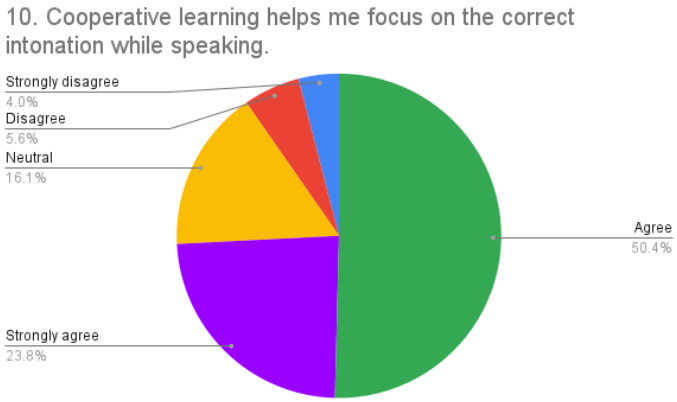


Figure:4.10

Analysis of Statement 11

I feel more confident in using complex sentences during cooperative learning tasks.

The data in the figure below shows that 43.5% of the participants agree and 17.3% strongly agree that cooperative learning increases their confidence in using complex sentences. This means that approximately 60.8% of students feel positive about the impact of cooperative learning on their ability to use complex sentence structures. The 24.6% of neutral responses indicate that a significant portion of students may experience varying degrees of confidence or may not fully perceive the impact of cooperative learning on this aspect of their language use.

Additionally, 10.5% disagree and 4% strongly disagree, which suggests that some students do not find cooperative learning beneficial in using or improving their use of complex sentences in English. The mean frequency for this statement is 3.59 showing that generally students feel confident using complex sentences during cooperative learning.

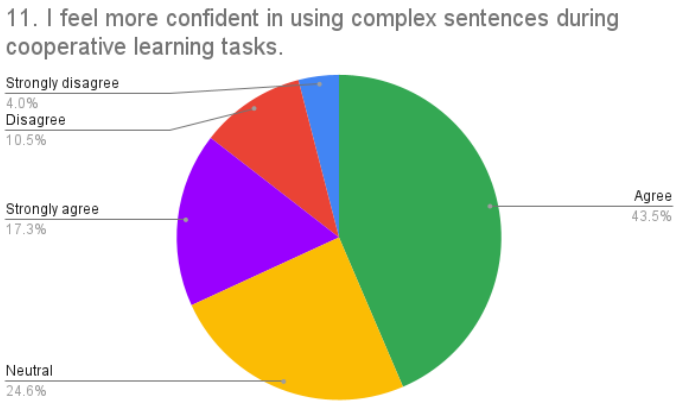


Figure:4.11

Theme 4: Vocabulary Usage

Analysis of Statement 12

I learn new vocabulary more effectively through cooperative learning activities.

The data in the figure below indicates that 56.7% of the participants agree and 23.1% strongly agree that cooperative learning activities improve their ability to learn new vocabulary effectively. This suggests that 79.8% of students perceive cooperative learning as a beneficial method for vocabulary acquisition. On the other hand, 14.2% of students are neutral, 3.2% disagree and 2.8% strongly disagree, pointing to a minority of students who do not find cooperative learning particularly effective for vocabulary learning. The mean frequency of this

statement is 3.93 showing that a significant number of students believe that they learn new vocabulary more effectively through cooperative learning.

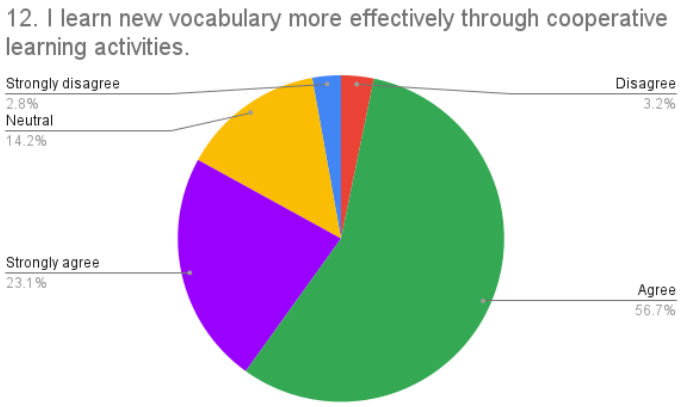


Figure:4.12

Analysis of Statement 13

Cooperative learning helps me use a wider range of vocabulary when speaking.

The results in the figure below reveal that 56% of the participants agree and 20.2% strongly agree that cooperative learning supports the use of a wider range of vocabulary during speaking activities. This reflects a significant portion of students who believe that cooperative learning fosters vocabulary expansion and application. 16.1% of students remained neutral, indicating uncertainty or varied experiences regarding the effectiveness of cooperative learning in enhancing vocabulary use. Additionally, 4.8% disagree and 2.8% strongly disagree, highlighting a small segment of students who do not perceive cooperative learning as beneficial for improving the range of vocabulary while speaking. The mean score is 3.86 indicating that cooperative learning generally helps students to use a wider range of vocabulary while speaking.

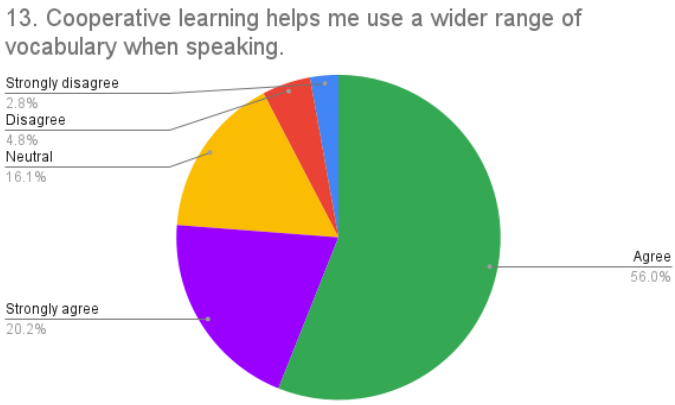


Figure:4.13

Analysis of Statement 14

I feel more confident experimenting with new vocabulary in group discussions.

The data in the figure below indicates that 53.3% of the respondents agree and 19.1% strongly agree that cooperative learning increases their confidence in experimenting with new vocabulary during group discussions. 16.7% of students were neutral, and a smaller portion, 8.5%, disagreed, and 2.4% strongly disagreed, showing that a few students do not feel as supported or confident in experimenting with new vocabulary through cooperative learning activities. The mean frequency is 3.78 for this statement. This suggests that a majority of students feel empowered to explore and use new words within a collaborative setting, which may contribute to vocabulary acquisition and language development.

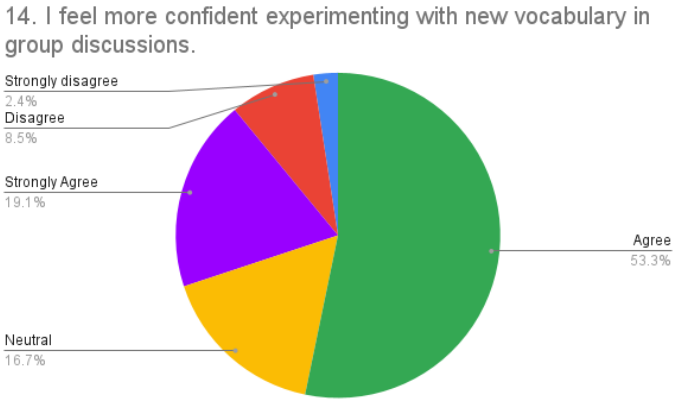


Figure:4.14

Theme 5: Social Interaction and Peer Support

Analysis of Statement 15

I receive helpful feedback from my peers during group work.

According to the data in the figure below, 61% of students agree and 17.9% strongly agree that they receive constructive feedback from their peers during group work. Conversely, 14.6% remained neutral, indicating varying perceptions of the usefulness of peer feedback. A minority of students, 3.7% strongly disagree and 2.8% disagree, do not perceive peer feedback as helpful during group work. The mean score is 3.87 suggesting that a significant portion of the student population see peer feedback as a valuable component of their cooperative learning experience.



Figure:4.15

Analysis of Statement 16

Cooperative learning has improved my ability to interact socially in English.

The data in the figure below reveals that 58.1% of students agree and 24.6% strongly agree that cooperative learning has increased their social interaction skills in English. 12.5% of the respondents remained neutral, suggesting a mixed or uncertain view of the benefits, while a small percentage, 1.6%, disagreed, and 3.2% strongly disagreed, indicating that some students do not perceive significant improvements in their social interaction skills. The mean frequency for this statement is 3.99. This indicates a strong positive perception of cooperative learning's impact on social communication.

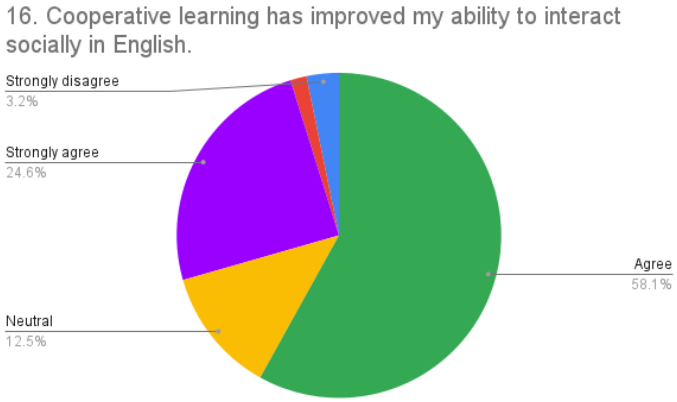


Figure:4.16

Analysis of Statement 17

My peers help me improve my speaking skills during cooperative learning sessions.

The data in the figure below indicates that 60.3% of students agree and 17% strongly agree that their peers significantly aid in improving their speaking skills during cooperative learning sessions. However, 16.6% of students remained neutral, suggesting that the effect of peer assistance on their speaking skills may be inconsistent or perceived differently. A smaller

proportion, 4.5%, disagree, and 1.6% strongly disagree, pointing to a minority who do not perceive peer support as beneficial. The mean frequency is 3.87. This reflects an endorsement of peer support in enhancing speaking abilities.

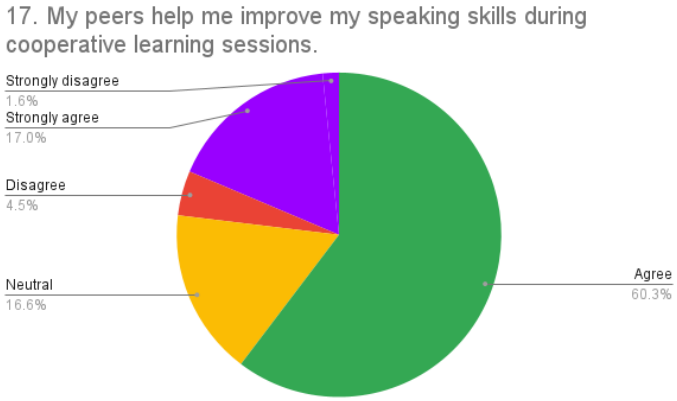


Figure:4.17

Theme 6: Group Dynamics and Collaboration

Analysis of Statement 18

I work well with my group members during cooperative learning activities.

The data in the figure below shows that 63% of students agree and 22% strongly agree that they collaborate effectively with their group members during cooperative learning activities. 11% of the students remain neutral, 1.6% disagree and 2.4% strongly disagree, suggesting a minor segment of students who feel less effectiveness in their group interactions. The mean frequency is 4.01 which indicates a high level of perceived efficacy in group work.

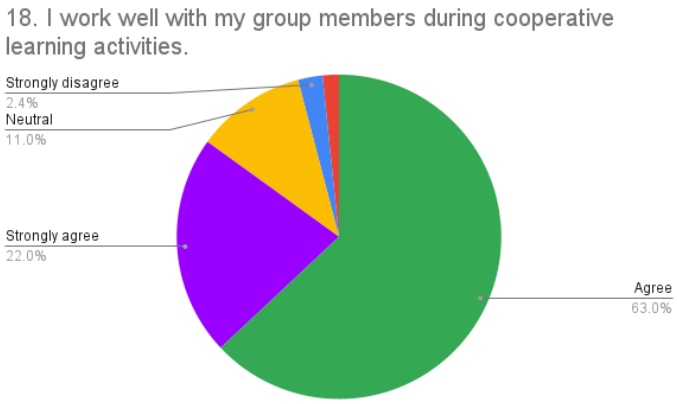


Figure:4.18

Analysis of Statement 19

Cooperative learning helps build a positive relationship among classmates.

The data in the figure below indicates that 61.4% of students agree and 27.6% strongly agree that cooperative learning helps to build positive relationships among classmates. 7.7%, remain neutral, which suggests varying personal experiences or perceptions. Only 1.2% disagree and 2% strongly disagree, pointing to a minor fraction of students who do not perceive cooperative learning as beneficial for relationship building. The mean score is 4.11. This substantial majority reflects a strong consensus that such activities contribute to a supportive classroom environment.

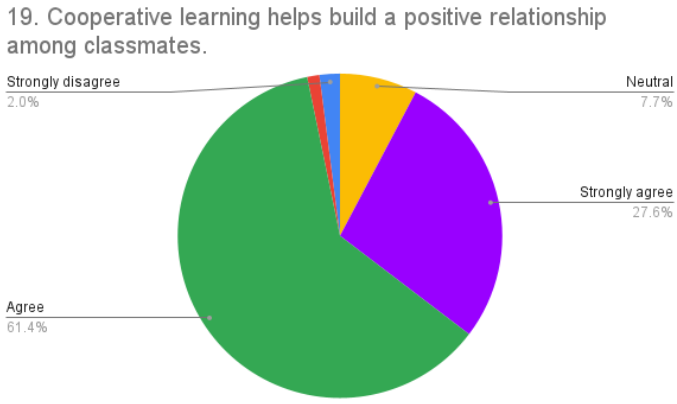


Figure:4.19

Analysis of statement 20

I feel that my contributions are valued in group discussions.

The result in the figure below shows that 64.2% of students agree and 20.3% strongly agree that they feel their contributions are valued during group discussions. The neutral response from 11.4% of students may reflect varying levels of experience or perceived value of contributions, while a minimal 1.2% disagree and 2.8% strongly disagree, suggesting that few students feel undervalued. The mean frequency is 3.98 showing that the majority indicates a positive perception of personal recognition and respect within cooperative learning settings.

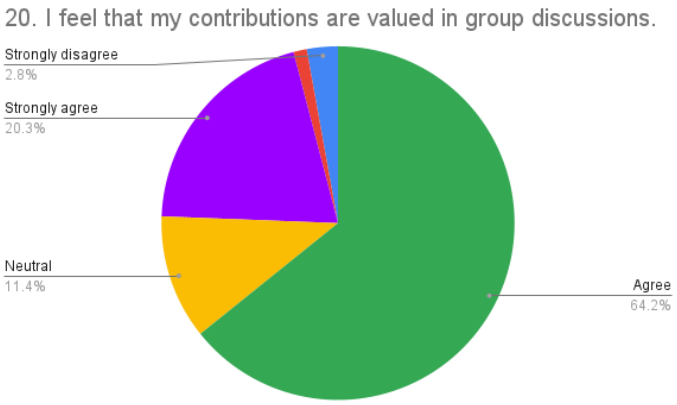


Figure:4.20

Theme 7: Critical Thinking Development

Analysis of Statement 21

Group activities help me develop better critical thinking skills when speaking in English.

The responses to this statement in the figure below indicate that a substantial majority of participants, 85% comprising 61.9% who agreed and 23.1% who strongly agreed, perceive that group activities significantly enhance their critical thinking skills in English speaking. A smaller portion of the respondents, 12.5%, remained neutral, while 1.6% disagreed and 2.4%

strongly disagreed. The mean score for this statement is 4.06 showing that most students believe group activities help to promote and develop their critical thinking skills when speaking in English.

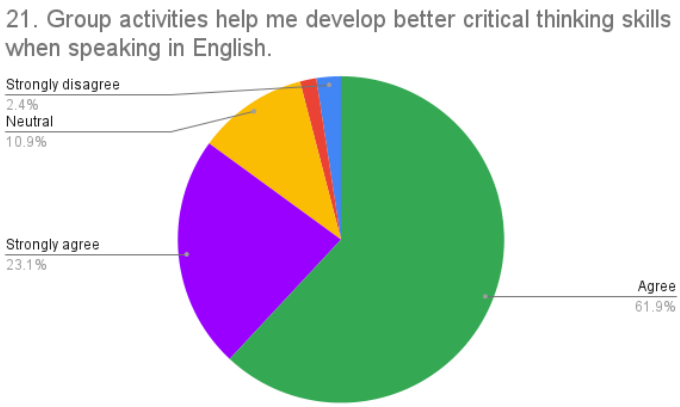


Figure:4.21

Analysis of Statement 22

Cooperative learning encourages me to think more deeply about the topics discussed.

The results in the figure below show that a significant majority of respondents, 86.2% out of which 60.7% agreed and 25.5% strongly agreed, reported that cooperative learning fosters deeper thinking about discussed topics. In contrast, 11.9% of participants were neutral, and a small percentage, 2.8%, disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed. The mean frequency is 4.14 showing that most respondents believe that cooperative learning encourages them to think deeply.

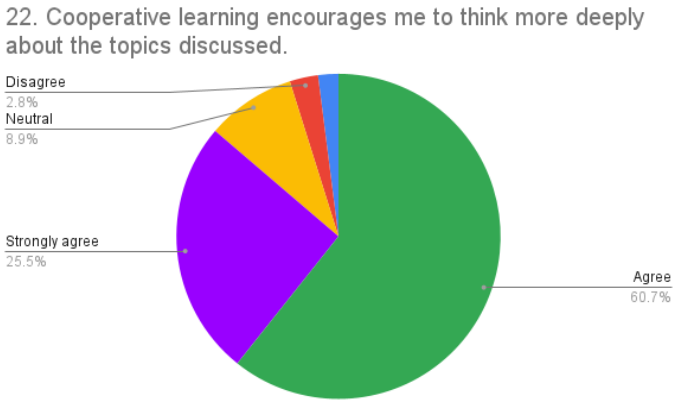


Figure:4.22

Analysis of Statement 23

I am able to express my thoughts more clearly during group tasks.

As indicated from the results in the figure below majority of respondents, totaling 80.5%, 57.6% who agreed, and 22.9% who strongly agreed, feel that cooperative learning enhances their ability to articulate their thoughts clearly during group tasks. Only 13.5% of participants were neutral, while 4.1% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed. The mean score is 3.96 showing general agreement that group tasks allow them to express their thoughts clearly.

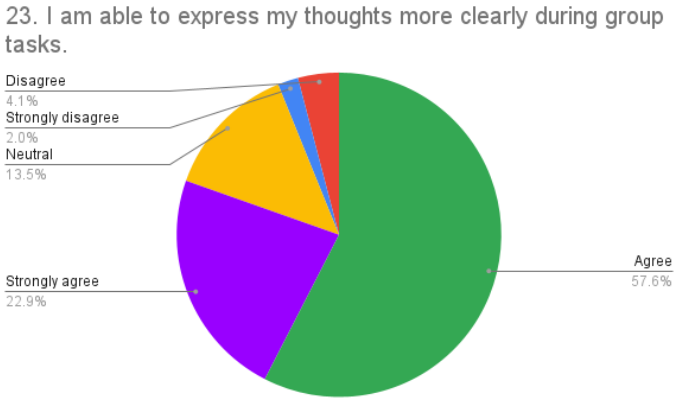


Figure:4.23

Theme 8: Overcoming Challenges and Barriers

Analysis of Statement 24

Cooperative learning helps me overcome my fear of speaking in English.

It can be seen in the figure below that a significant majority of respondents, comprising 80% out of which 55.1% agreed and 24.9% strongly agreed, reported that cooperative learning helps them overcome their fear of speaking in English. 12.7% were neutral and 4.9% disagreed and

2.4% strongly disagreed. The mean frequency is 3.95 demonstrating a general agreement that cooperative learning helps students to overcome their fear of speaking in English.

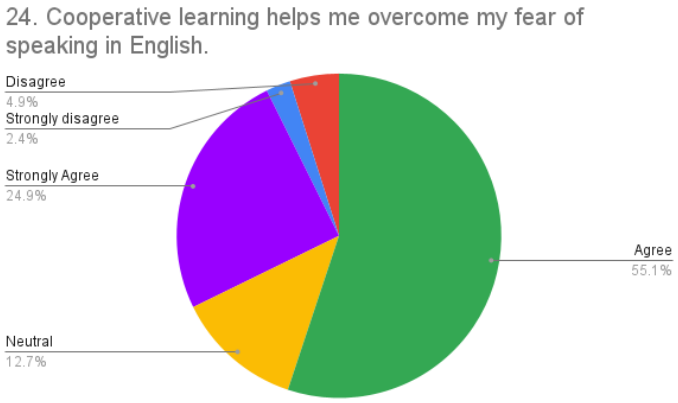


Figure:4.24

Analysis of Statement 25

I find it easier to express myself during group activities than individual tasks.

As is seen in the figure below majority of respondents, with a total of 73.6% out of which 53.4% agreed and 20.2% strongly agreed, find it easier to express themselves during group activities compared to individual tasks. This contrasts with 6.1% who disagreed and 3.2% who strongly disagreed and 17% who were neutral. The mean score for this statement is 3.81, which indicates that on an average respondents find it easier to express themselves in group activities as compared to the individual tasks.

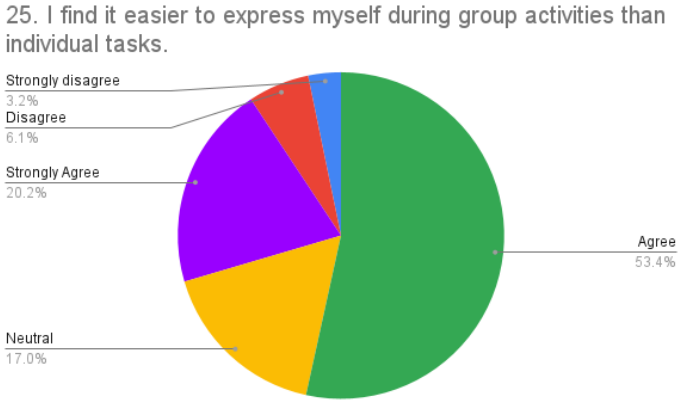


Figure:4.25

Analysis of Statement 26

Group work allows me to practice speaking without feeling judged.

It is indicated in the results of the figure below that the majority of respondents 56.5% agreed and 16.3% strongly agreed that group work provides a space for practicing speaking without feeling judged. However, 13.8% remained neutral, while a total of 13.4%, 10.6% disagreed and 2.8% strongly disagreed as they feel judged in these settings. The mean score is 3.73 showing a general agreement that in group work students feel less judged so they can easily practice their speaking.



Figure:4.26

Analysis of Statement 27

Group activities help me address language proficiency gaps with my classmates.

As seen in the figure below, the results show that a significant majority of participants 62.6% agreeing and 16.3% strongly agreeing believe that group activities are effective in addressing language proficiency gaps among classmates. The neutral response rate is 15.4%, while 5.6% of respondents 2.8% disagreed and 2.8% strongly disagreed, do not perceive group activities

as helpful in this regard. The mean frequency is 3.87 which indicates that generally respondents agree that group work is effective for addressing the proficiency gaps among classmates.

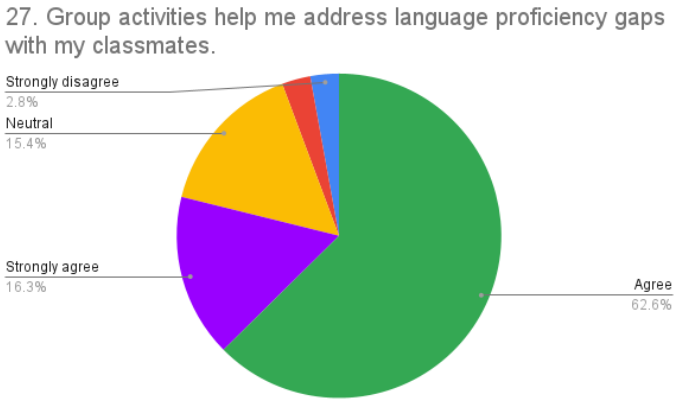


Figure:4.27

Analysis of Statement 28

I find that cooperative learning reduces inequalities in participation among students.

The data in the figure below shows that 58.1% of respondents agreed and 18.3% strongly agreed that cooperative learning helps reduce inequalities in participation among students. The neutral response rate stands at 15.9%, while 7.8% of respondents with 4.1% disagreeing and 3.7% strongly disagreeing do not believe that cooperative learning alleviates participation disparities. The mean score for this statement is 3.84 showing a general perception that cooperative learning reduces inequalities in participation among students.

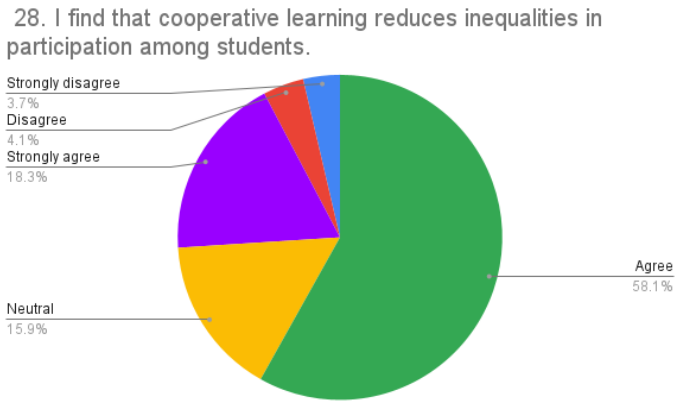


Figure:4.28

Theme 9: Cognitive Complexity

Analysis of Statement 29

Cooperative learning helps me connect ideas and organise my thoughts more logically when speaking in English.

According to the data in the figure below, 56.5% of the participants agree and 22% strongly agree that cooperative learning facilitates the better organisation and logical connection of ideas when speaking in English. The neutral response rate is 16.3%, with a total of 5.3% of respondents of which 3.7% disagree and 1.6% strongly disagree as they do not find cooperative learning helpful in this regard. The mean score is 3.94 indicating that most agree cooperative learning helps them to connect ideas and organize their thoughts more logically while speaking English.

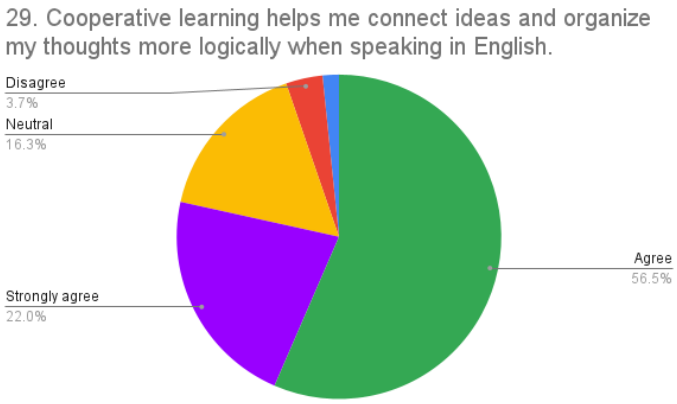


Figure:4.29

Analysis of Statement 30

Group discussions help me explore complex ideas and express them effectively in English.

The data in the figure below reveals that 62.6% of respondents agree and 17.5% strongly agree that group discussions assist them in exploring and expressing complex ideas effectively in English. A total of 14.6% of respondents are neutral on this aspect, while 5.3% out of which 3.3% disagree and 2% strongly disagree, do not find group discussions as beneficial for handling complex ideas. The mean frequency for this statement is 3.90 which shows that most respondents agree that group discussions help them to explore more complex ideas and assist them in expressing effectively in English.

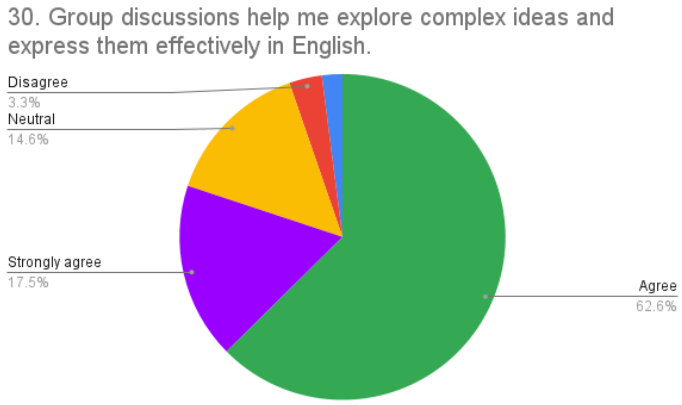


Figure:4. 30

Theme 10: Confidence

Analysis of Statement 31

My confidence in speaking English has improved through cooperative learning activities.

The data in the figure below shows that 56.7% of participants agree and 26.3% strongly agree that cooperative learning activities have enhanced their confidence in speaking English. This positive trend indicates that a substantial majority of students perceive an improvement in their self-assurance when engaging in cooperative tasks. Conversely, 11.3% of respondents remained neutral, and a total of 5.6%, out of which 3.6% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed as they did not see a significant impact on their confidence from these activities. The mean

score is 4.01 which shows that students agree that cooperative learning activities improve their confidence in speaking English.

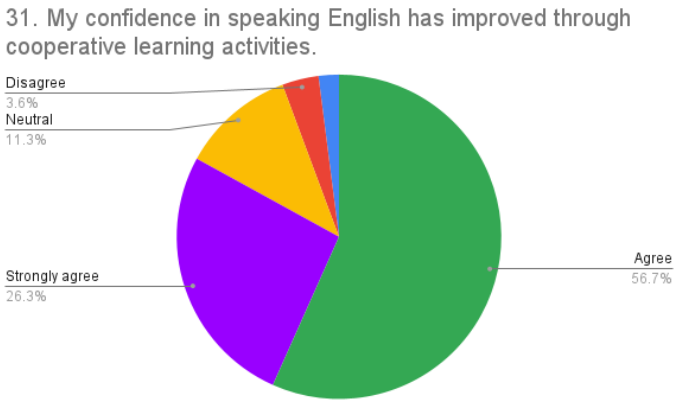


Figure:4.31

Analysis of Statement 32

I feel more self-assured when presenting my ideas in English during group discussions.

According to the data in the figure below, 63.4% of participants agree and 18.7% strongly agree that they feel more self-assured when presenting their ideas in English during group discussions. This substantial majority suggests that cooperative learning environments significantly contribute to students' self-assurance in their English-speaking abilities. 12.2% of respondents remained neutral, and a minor 5.7% out of which 2.4% disagreed and 3.3% strongly disagreed feel that their self-assurance is not notably enhanced by these activities. The mean frequency is 3.92 indicating that generally students agree to feel more self-assured when presenting their ideas in English during group discussions.

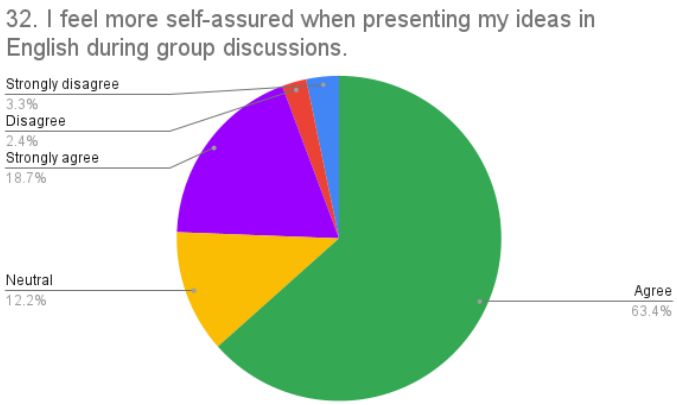


Figure:4. 32

Teacher's Support and Facilitation

Analysis of Statement 33

The teacher's facilitation during cooperative learning activities helps me speak better English.

The data in the figure below indicates that 64.9% of respondents agree and 20% strongly agree that the teacher's facilitation during cooperative learning activities positively impacts their English-speaking skills. This finding demonstrates a strong consensus among students that effective facilitation by educators enhances their ability to speak English more proficiently. 11.8% remained neutral, while a small minority, 1.6% disagreed and 1.6% strongly disagreed as they do not perceive a significant benefit from the teacher's facilitation. The mean score for this statement is 4.01 indicating that most students agree that teacher's facilitation during cooperative learning activities positively impacts their English speaking skills.



Figure:4.33

Analysis of Statement 34

I receive useful feedback from my teacher during group activities.

The data in the figure below shows that 61.9% of respondents agree and 21.1% strongly agree that they receive useful feedback from their teacher during group activities. This reflects a substantial proportion of students who value the feedback provided by their teachers, which they perceive as beneficial to their learning process. 11.3%, remained neutral on this issue, while 2.8% disagreed and another 2.8% strongly disagreed, indicating a minor percentage who do not find the feedback as useful. The mean score is 3.95 indicating that on average respondents agree that they receive useful feedback from their teacher during group activities.

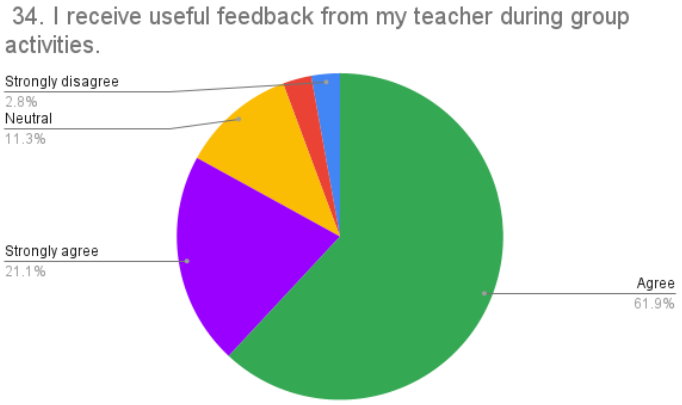


Figure:4.34

Analysis of Statement 35

The strategies used by my teacher in group work improve my speaking skills.

According to the data presented in the figure below, 41.6% of respondents agree and another 41.6% strongly agree that the strategies employed by their teacher in group work significantly enhance their speaking skills. This indicates that a majority of students recognise and appreciate the effectiveness of the teacher's strategies in improving their speaking abilities. Meanwhile, 11% remained neutral, suggesting that these strategies have a varying impact on

different students. A small proportion, 1.6%, disagreed, and 4.1% strongly disagreed, reflecting some dissatisfaction or perceived ineffectiveness of these strategies. The mean frequency for this statement is 4.17 demonstrating that students believe that strategies used by their teacher in group work improve their speaking skills.

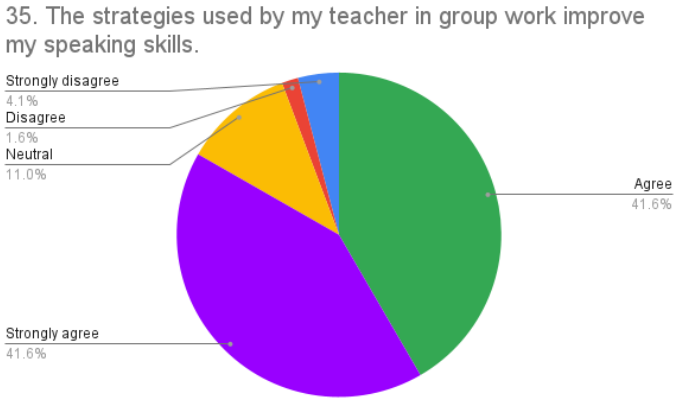


Figure:4.35

4.3 Semi-Structured Teacher' Interview

The semi-structured interviews with teachers were conducted using a comprehensive set of 17 open-ended questions designed to explore the nuanced experiences and observations related to cooperative learning's impact on various aspects of language education. The semi-structured interview with six English teachers of grade 8 was structured around 11 thematic areas: engagement and participation, motivation, speaking skill development (including language accuracy, fluency, pronunciation, intonation, and linguistic complexity), vocabulary usage, social interaction, and peer support, group dynamics and collaboration, critical thinking development, overcoming challenges and barriers, cognitive complexity, confidence, and teacher's support and facilitation. Thematic analysis was used to bring out trends and patterns among these themes to provide rich insights into the impact of cooperative learning strategies on teaching & learning dynamics. This approach enabled an in-depth exploration of teachers' perspectives on a number of the advantages and disadvantages attached to cooperative learning,

allowing for valuable information concerning its employment in boosting students' speaking skills as well as meeting multiple instructional demands.

4.3.1 Qualitative data analysis

The use of semi-structured teacher interviews with open-ended questions also enhanced the type of data collected with regard to cooperative learning as a practice related to improved speaking skills among 8th-grade ESL students. Such a qualitative mode of inquiry will enable the investigation of a research context in an ambivalent way thus letting the perceptions, experiences, and practices of teachers be viewed flexibly resulting in meaningful insights that cannot be identified with quantitative methods alone (Cohen et al., 2018). The open-ended nature of the questions allows teachers to provide more detail about the use of cooperative learning, and reveal constraints and facilitation strategies that have an impact on the effectiveness of teaching strategies. Qualitative results present an overarching perspective of the impact that cooperative learning has on language acquisition hence shedding light on areas for improvement and providing actionable insights (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). The use of both data set types allows a deeper understanding of educational phenomena where student questionnaires provide statistical trends and personal experiences from teachers are revealed in the semi-structured interviews. It offers a holistic and comprehensive perspective on improving speaking skills through cooperative learning and overcoming obstacles (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

4.3.2 Thematic Analysis of Teacher Insights on Cooperative Learning in ESL

1. Engagement and Participation

Cooperative learning strategies were considered effective in enhancing student motivation and performance. Cooperative learning was reported as engaging and participative by all six teachers. The teachers' responses offered insight into how they examined student

participation and engagement in cooperative learning tasks. Watching students at work, gauging their level of interest, and assessing the activities that have caught their attention are some recurring ideas. The teachers use a variety of ways to determine if and how much any student is participating and contributing their share in group work. Teacher A evaluates student participation based on their eagerness and attitude during group discussions. She notes, *"Whenever we are having group discussions, I can see how eager students are to participate in them as well as their attitude towards working together."* Teacher A checks the initiative students take in asking questions and expressing interest in their peers' opinions, indicating active participation. Teacher B measures engagement by observing how often students contribute to discussions and respond to each other. She stated, *"I gauge student engagement by looking at their level of interaction and participation in cooperative activities."* Teacher B also uses quick feedback sessions to understand students' thoughts on the activity, which helps in assessing their engagement levels. Teacher C assesses participation through observable behaviors during role-plays and group dialogues. She mentions, *"I look for eye contact, signs of active listening, and genuine engagement."* Teacher C uses informal benchmarks to gauge how students interact and assist each other in learning. Teacher D monitors engagement by noting student responses to prompts and their effort in collaborative tasks. She observes, *"Students who are engaged will often take on leadership roles or show they are eager to help others."* The quality of interactions and contributions is used to evaluate participation. Teacher E assesses engagement by observing students' interaction levels and communication during activities. She highlights, *"I observe them through the level of their interaction/participation and communication between students."* Teacher E looks at how actively students contribute to discussions and collaborate with each other. Teacher F observes engagement by tracking students' ability to participate actively, including speaking up and asking questions. She notes,

"Participation is monitored by how often they ask questions and how much effort the students put into doing group assignments."

The teachers' responses consistently focus on observing various indicators of engagement and participation. Common themes include monitoring students' interaction levels, their enthusiasm for tasks, and their involvement in discussions. Methods used include direct observation of behaviors like eye contact and initiative in asking questions, as well as feedback mechanisms and informal benchmarks. Teachers A, B, and E emphasise the importance of tracking students' active participation and interactions with peers. The teachers described behaviours like asking questions and taking part in discussions as indications of engagement by students. Teachers C and D examine observable behaviours and notetaking to evaluate participation level, quality, and leadership roles. It is evident that evaluating engagement and participation involves a combination of classroom observations, interaction analysis, and feedback. The strategies employed by the teachers aim to capture different aspects of student involvement, ensuring that all students are actively participating and contributing to cooperative learning activities.

2. Motivation

The teachers reported that students enjoy group work and are more willing, more active, and do better in their language practice with their peers. All of the six teachers mentioned that cooperative learning ignites a new level of motivation and willingness to speak English. They found that this allows a stress-free environment where students are more confident and willing to take risks in language. Teachers also added that peer interactions are very necessary in ensuring their motivation, as the students tend to get a sense of responsibility and encouragement innovatively by their fellow mates. But teachers also acknowledged a few challenges, like the risk that not every student might have equal access or some students might

feel unengaged or overshadowed by their more dominant peers. Teacher A emphasised how cooperative learning reduces stress and encourages participation: *"They try to participate fully and express their thoughts. However, mutual learning might be less motivating if one feels overshadowed and notices that the performance is not as high as that of others."* Teacher B similarly noted that cooperative learning inspires greater involvement: *"Children have more chance to practice when working in teams and can get quick feedback and help from peers."* Teacher C highlighted the importance of peer feedback: *"This hands-on use of language, along with positive praise from peers, really encourages students to participate at a higher level."* Teacher D linked motivation to purpose-driven language use: *"Students are often more motivated to speak when they realise their dominion of English makes a significant input to their group's success."* Teacher E focused on communal support: *"Students do not fear mistakes in this communal setting, as they correct and cheer for one another."* Teacher F emphasised the inclusive environment: *"Students are more motivated in general, they love the social element of working with classmates."*

All teachers agreed that cooperative learning positively influences students' motivation to speak English. Teachers A, B, and C noted how cooperative tasks provide students with more opportunities for practice, allowing them to feel more confident. Teacher D emphasised that students are more motivated when they feel their contributions are crucial to the group's success. Teacher E highlighted the support students receive from peers, while Teacher F focused on the social and inclusive aspects that motivate students. However, Teachers A, B, C, and D also acknowledged that there can be unequal participation, where less vocal or shy students might feel overshadowed or disengaged, emphasising the importance of teacher intervention in maintaining balance.

3. Enhancement of Speaking Skills

All six teachers agreed that cooperative learning is beneficial for developing student speaking skills, language accuracy, oral fluency, and pronunciation. But the improvements, they said, are more pronounced in some groups of students than others and depend on how activities are structured and the degree to which teachers help guide peer corrections. Although the majority of teachers were supportive of peer correction as a result of the cooperative learning design they were using, many expressed concerns about the possible inaccuracies in peer corrections that may prevent improvement and increase the risk of fossilised mistakes. However, there was a general consensus that teacher guidance and support are still required to improve language outcomes in collaborative learning. Teacher A strongly emphasised the impact on language accuracy and fluency by saying *"I consistently witness an increase in students' oral fluency as a consequence of having cooperative learning activities. They always get good at putting their thoughts into words."* The fossilisation of error was also something Teacher A warned about and said that *the teachers should "oversee the process".* Teacher B added that the cooperative-learning environment is an important factor in helping students achieve greater linguistic accuracy by "*allowing them to identify errors and practice correct language use."* She also mentioned that it has a positive impact on students as they can *"recognise and fix pronunciation errors on the spot."* Teacher C similarly found potential advantages but said that *the* teachers must "*monitor and guide the feedback process to maximise accuracy gains."* Teacher D expressed moderate agreement about the benefits of cooperative learning on accuracy and fluency. She said that the *"extent of improvement may vary based on the complexity of tasks and proficiency levels of students".* Teacher E highlighted how peer corrections contribute to pronunciation improvements and said that her students *"are quick to correct each other's mistake and I have guided them to take corrections from peers as a positive thing."* Teacher F acknowledged that cooperative learning leads to *"visible changes"* in language accuracy, though some students may progress at different rates. She agreed on the

positive impact of pronunciation by saying that *"peer feedback helps them practice and adjust their pronunciation."*

All three teachers A, B, and C strongly agreed to improved language accuracy and fluency through cooperative learning as they believed that peer corrections are a way of improving pronunciation. Yet Teachers D, E, and F were more reserved overall in their assessments; they observed progress but expressed some caution, noting that the quality of peer feedback is subject to a range of factors including task complexity, student engagement during the feedback process, and the accuracy of feedback given by peers.

4. Vocabulary Usage

Cooperative learning increases the academic vocabulary of students, especially during group work activities where new terms, vocabulary words, phrases, and concepts are learned. Vocabulary building is a change teachers see happening during collaborative discussions and projects. All of the teachers agreed that cooperative learning improves students' vocabulary use but the degree to which these results have changed depends on variables like the structure of activities, student engagement levels, and even teacher guidance. While most teachers noticed more topic-specific or contextual vocabulary improvement during group tasks, they also had mixed feelings about real improvement, as they believe that there are inconsistencies and often students rely on using the same old words all over again. A few teachers emphasised the necessity for additional teacher support to enhance vocabulary gains. Teacher A noted significant vocabulary in her students through group projects as during the process the learners are "*exposed to the new words and contexts."* She gave an example where her students used environmental vocabulary during a group project using words *"concerning sustainability which none of them might have used otherwise."* Teacher B similarly observed improvements due to peer interaction as students learn *"words and expressions that students adopt from their*

friends." She gave an example of students using technology-related jargon during a debate and for her *"that was a positive sign in terms of progression."* Teacher C expressed a more cautious view, noting that vocabulary improvement "*might not always be significant"* as the depth of vocabulary usage sometimes remains basic, reinforcing the need for explicit vocabulary instruction. Teacher D agreed with the benefits of cooperative learning but commented on the potential challenges due to the "*absence of a structured group work form or when no guidance is provided on language usage."* According to Teacher E students often teach each other new words during cooperative learning as her students started "*using more specialised vocabulary related to historical contexts and started telling each other the new words and their meanings without an input from my side."* However, she also pointed out the inconsistency of vocabulary improvement and stressed the need for targeted vocabulary exercises. Teacher F noted only *"some improvements"* and explained that the depth of vocabulary usage is often limited: *"The degree of vocabulary used is usually not very deep given that peer-to-peer interaction and activities may be simple."*

Teachers A, B, and E strongly agreed that cooperative learning exposes students to a richer vocabulary through peer interactions and topic-specific tasks. They highlighted concrete examples of students using specialized language, suggesting that these activities promote vocabulary expansion. However, Teachers C, D, and F were more cautious in their assessments, pointing out that the depth of vocabulary improvement can be limited, especially if activities are unstructured or lack teacher guidance. Across the board, teachers agreed that while cooperative learning helps in vocabulary development, it is most effective when complemented by explicit instruction and well-designed activities.

5. Social Interaction and Peer Support

The importance of peer support as a core element in cooperative learning emerged clearly across all of the interviews. Teachers agreed that peer support is pivotal to enhancing students' speaking skills. Together, they stress that students learn from one another when they are in an environment where peers correct each other, and provide knowledge, and support. Teachers though have mixed thoughts about whether that assistance is truly effective, and how much work it saves for the teachers. Teacher A acknowledges that there are various benefits to having peer support, though not all peers may be able to meet the specific needs. She explained that: *"Students often correct each other's mistakes or make useful suggestions... the effectiveness of peer support can vary depending upon if they are willing to support that day or not."* Teacher A pointed out that peer support is crucial but is dependent on the group dynamics. Teacher B believes that peer support fosters confidence. She said: *"They sometimes talk easier in a group setting or voice their opinion in English more confidently."* Teacher B gives an example of students experimenting with sentence structures during role-play, making a point that peer support offers more than just practice—it encourages creative language use. However, she also warns that peer support must be real and effective: *"It is crucial that the support provided in these scenarios is helpful and not just superficial."* Teacher C stresses the importance of peer support in vocabulary development and pronunciation: *"It is also good that kids help one another by teaching new words and correcting an accent."* Teacher C supports peer learning because students actively teach each other in discussions and receive corrections. Teacher D sees peer support as beneficial but highlights its limitations when the teacher's guidance is not present. She said: *"Their attempts are not particularly helpful, as the teacher has to train pupils in advance."* Teacher D believes peer support is effective overall but requires a structured approach from the teacher to ensure equal benefits for all students. Teacher E shares the view that peer support creates mentoring opportunities. *"Students, who are good at speaking, usually act as mentors for the less confident peers in collaborative projects."* Teacher

E points out that active and brilliant students often take on leadership roles, guiding their peers to improve spoken skills. Teacher F shares similar sentiments but acknowledges limitations: *"Students who are comfortable with speaking English often assist their peers, which can be motivating and educational."* Teacher F is of the view that peer support can improve pronunciation but it is not always enough for the needs and requirements of every student.

All teachers agreed that peer support can improve the speaking skills of students. The areas of development include enhanced student confidence, peer correction of pronunciation and grammar, and opportunities for more proficient students to mentor their peers. Teachers B, E, and F provided examples of students actively learning from each other through cooperative learning, showing the practical impact of peer support on fluency and confidence. However, both Teachers A and D highlighted the variability of peer support, noting that it is not always effective without proper guidance or continuous engagement from all students. Peer support can be a powerful tool in speaking skill development, but its success depends on group dynamics and structured teacher input and guidance.

6. Group Dynamics and Collaboration

The experience of efficient group dynamics was illustrated as an element that positively affects language learning. According to the teachers, a well-managed group means more language practice and better skill development. According to these six teachers, group dynamics is one of the most important aspects that determines whether or not cooperative learning tasks yield a successful result in terms of speaking skills enhancement. They also agreed that well-functioning groups foster better language outcomes, while poorly functioning ones can impede learning. This theme addresses how balanced participation, effective collaboration, and mutual respect can either increase or decrease language development in group settings. As teacher A indicated group dynamics have a dual character "*balanced*

participation and mutual respect" lead to improvements but "*poor group dynamics, such as conflicts or unequal participation, can hinder learning."* In other words, this view suggests that good or bad group dynamics may contribute to the effectiveness of cooperative learning. Teacher B indicated far more variability in the dynamics of groups and believed that dominant students or uncooperative group members could spoil the learning for others. She suggests how group dynamics can be a *"huge variable"* in language performance, but also that the effect, in her class, has generally been beneficial rather than detrimental. Teacher C states group dynamics impact language outcomes as group dynamics can affect the quality of the groups and thus, in turn, the results. Poor dynamics like *"disengagement or hesitance,"* she says, are barriers to learning. This view reinforces the importance of strong group collaboration for achieving successful language practice. In the opinion of teacher D, group dynamics have a huge impact as *"there were cases when groups had such a bad mark because they constantly argued and not everyone worked within the group"*. On the other hand, well-functioning groups *"worked well as a team and the output was great,"* she says. This highlights the tangible results of both positive and negative group dynamics on speaking tasks. Teacher E underscores the importance of equal contribution as in "*well-organised groups that apply collaborative activity, students often demonstrate better fluency and accuracy."* However, she also warns against group imbalance, where *"one or two students dominate the group,"* resulting in less effective outcomes for the cooperative task. Teacher F emphasises the role of encouragement by saying that students *"mostly encourage their group fellows,"* suggesting that positive group dynamics are closely tied to peer support and motivation.

The teachers agree that group dynamics are fundamental to the success of cooperative learning in improving speaking skills. Positive group dynamics—characterised by balanced participation, collaboration, and mutual encouragement—lead to better language practice, fluency, and accuracy. Teachers A, C, and E provide examples of how well-organised groups

contribute to significant language improvements, while Teachers B and D point out the negative effects of poor dynamics, such as dominance by certain students or lack of participation. All teachers stress that group dynamics can be a double-edged sword; when managed well, they enhance learning, but when dysfunctional, they can detract from the overall effectiveness of cooperative tasks.

7. Critical Thinking Development

Cooperative learning activities were reported to promote critical thinking by encouraging students to analyse and articulate their ideas. Structured tasks that require deeper engagement were noted to be particularly effective. The theme of critical thinking development through cooperative learning activities is a consistent topic across the responses of all six teachers. They generally agree that cooperative learning can foster critical thinking skills, although they also acknowledge variability in its effectiveness depending on group dynamics, task structure, and individual student engagement. Each teacher highlights different aspects of how cooperative learning encourages students to analyse, reflect, and articulate their ideas, ultimately leading to improved critical thinking abilities. Teacher A shared her experiences by saying: *"Students are often expected to express opposing opinions, apply a persuasive argument in different formats, and think critically during group discussion or problem-solving tasks."* Now her emphasis here is that these activities do more than just enhance speaking skills—they *"create a higher level of critical engagement with the language."* Teacher B on the other hand said that some groups need more guidance but agreed that cooperative learning promotes critical thinking: *"In a collaborative writing task, students chat and comment on the parts that their peers have contributed, which makes them think critically."* Teacher B later gave a further explanation of how informal interactions, such as peer commentary, encourage deeper thinking and reflection on language use. Teacher C was of the view that while

cooperative learning has a positive effect, *"not all students consistently apply critical thinking."* She highlights the importance of structured guidance to ensure that all students benefit from the activities. According to her students *"benefit from hearing diverse perspectives and developing their arguments"* during group discussions, but the depth of critical thinking varies. Teacher D said: *"In group activities where students need to analyse and evaluate several solutions to the problem, they tend to think more critically."* Teacher D attributes this improvement to the exposure to *"diverse perspectives in group settings"*, which challenges students to articulate their thoughts more clearly and engage in deeper analysis. Teacher E supports the idea that cooperative learning stimulates critical thinking, particularly in activities like *"peer reviews and group debates."* Teacher E stresses that providing proper guidance is necessary for students to fully benefit from these activities. She gave examples such as text analysis, where students *"engage in deeper critical thinking about the content and their interpretations."* Teacher F also emphasises the role of cooperative learning in developing critical thinking skills, especially in problem-solving tasks. In her view, students *"use their critical skills, and shared teamwork helps them do that well."* Her focus is on how collaborative problem-solving encourages students to explore different solutions and justify their answers which in turn builds critical thinking.

Generally, the teachers agree that cooperative learning can encourage students to think critically when they do tasks that need analysis, reflection, and argumentation. Teachers A, D, and F notice that group work increases students' willingness to evaluate ideas and engage in better English communication. Teachers B and E underlined the necessity of guidance on reinforcing critical thinking emphasising that it is necessary for students to receive structured support by teachers to be able to reflect on their work properly. Teacher C offers a more reserved view by suggesting that while cooperative learning has huge potential, its success depends on the level of engagement and the nature of the task. Overall, the teachers agree that

critical thinking is a key outcome of well-structured cooperative learning activities, though variability in student participation and task design may affect the extent of its development.

8. Overcoming Challenges and Barriers

Teachers discussed various challenges students face in cooperative learning, especially in speaking activities, and the strategies employed by them to overcome these barriers. The most prominent challenges identified include students' lack of confidence, uneven participation due to different proficiency levels, and difficulties with pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary. Teachers unanimously recognise the importance of creating supportive environments and implementing strategies to address these obstacles. Teacher A identifies confidence as the main concern, emphasising that students do not speak in class "*because of the fear that they might make mistakes."* Her focus is on creating a *"safe space and supportive environment"* where mistakes are seen as learning opportunities rather than failures. She further noted that confidence is something that *"develops over time".* Teacher B's main concerns were pronunciation and fluency as both can cause hurdles in cooperative learning activities, especially in group settings. According to her, these issues can become unmanageable when students do not receive individualised support. Her solution is to offer *"intensive pronunciation exercises"* and *"one-on-one feedback."* She elaborated on the importance of vocabulary development, explaining that students often lack the words they need to express themselves, but peer support and teacher guidance help to bridge this gap. For Teacher C the biggest challenge is differing proficiency levels in her class within groups that often lead to unequal participation, with stronger students dominating discussions. She tactically groups students and sometimes uses *"differentiated tasks"* to ensure that all students, regardless of ability, have equitable learning experiences. This ensures that weaker students are paired with stronger partners who can provide support. Teacher D focuses on the challenge of uneven participation,

particularly among introverted or shy students. She solved this problem by creating *"small, comfortable group settings"* and using *"ice-breaking activities"* to encourage engagement. Assigning structured roles within groups is another method she uses to ensure that all students are given an opportunity to contribute, promoting a more inclusive environment. Teacher E also identifies dominance by certain students as a barrier, which limits opportunities for quiet and shy students to practice speaking in her class. To counteract this, she establishes *"clear group roles and rotates responsibilities"* to ensure equal participation. After giving students their tasks, she closely monitors group interactions to ensure that all students are contributing, creating a more equitable environment. For Teacher F limited vocabulary of students is a major barrier that students face in cooperative speaking activities. Her solution is to create *"word study tasks"* and promote new vocabulary in student discussions. Moreover, she shares a vocabulary list at the beginning of each English lesson to prepare students with the words they will need for the lesson.

The teachers identify a range of barriers that students face in cooperative learning, from psychological obstacles like lack of confidence to linguistic challenges such as vocabulary and pronunciation. Common across their strategies is the focus on creating an environment where students feel supported, whether through confidence-building activities, structured roles, or differentiated tasks. Teachers A, D, and E emphasise the importance of fostering inclusive environments and ensuring that all students, including quieter or less confident ones, are actively participating. Teachers B and F focus on linguistic challenges, particularly pronunciation, and vocabulary, suggesting practical interventions like vocabulary lists and pronunciation exercises. Teacher C addresses the issue of varying proficiency levels and uses tactical grouping and differentiated tasks to ensure that all students benefit from cooperative activities. Overall, the teachers agree that addressing these barriers requires both a supportive classroom environment and targeted interventions, such as vocabulary support, structured

group roles, and confidence-building exercises. These strategies not only help students overcome specific challenges but also contribute to their overall speaking proficiency in cooperative learning contexts.

9. Cognitive Complexity

Cooperative learning was identified by teachers as an experiential learning activity that leads to cognitive growth in students as they apply higher-order thinking skills. According to the teachers' cognitive complexity was increased by tasks related to problem-solving, and analysis. The teachers' responses reveal the effect of cooperative learning activities on students' cognitive complexity, including ways to evaluate and develop the complex task achievement that occurs through these activities. To challenge students at more complex levels, teachers used strategies such as problem-based scenarios, role plays, and reflective tasks to evaluate cognitive skills. Teacher A describes using assignments that require students to engage in complex tasks, such as *"finding a current global problem"* and presenting their findings. This approach helps students practice *"mixing data, thinking complex thoughts, and stating multifaceted points*." She explained that using rubrics to measure critical thinking and problem-solving skills is the best-structured approach to evaluate cognitive complexity. Teacher B highlights the use of role plays and case studies to challenge students' higher-order thinking. For instance, in a *"business negotiation role-play,"* students must consider multiple perspectives and make informed decisions. She assesses students on *"how clearly they communicate their thoughts"* and uses peer reports to gauge cognitive contributions, suggesting a comprehensive evaluation of cognitive complexity. On the other hand, teacher C emphasises debates and problem-solving tasks as methods to check cognitive complexity. She observes whether students can *"think about complex concepts and communicate them."* The use of brainstorming and idea mapping further helps her to evaluate students' ability to arrange and

synthesise information, providing targeted support based on these observations. To check cognitive complexity teacher D uses project-based learning where students research and present on different topics. Her students did a *"reduce-reuse-recycle"* project that required her students to engage in *"critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative work."* She evaluates students' abilities through their research skills, depth of analysis, and presentation clarity, with regular checkpoints to monitor progress and provide support. Teacher E uses collaborative group discussions and case studies to assess cognitive complexity. By assigning complex case studies and observing group interactions, she evaluates how students *"articulate their ideas, challenge perspectives, and build collective understanding."* Reflective journaling is also used to track cognitive development over time, indicating a focus on continuous assessment as explained by teacher F. She shared that she often relies on observation alone to check cognitive complexity due to limited experience in the field so far. She focuses on how friendly and cooperative students are with one another, both during conversations and when pushing their own thinking to further depths, which she takes as some measure of the ability to grasp difficult ideas.

Within cooperative learning, teachers use several strategies to assess and increase the cognitive complexity of students. Approaches can vary from complex problem-solving tasks and role-plays to reflective activities and project-based learning. Teachers A, D, and E target cognitive complexity using structured approaches involving rubrics, project-based learning, or reflective journaling. They underscore the necessity of task complexity and feedback specificity in cultivating higher-order thinking. As such, Teachers B and C also focus on role-play and debates which allow peer feedback for cognitive learning development evaluation and support. In general, the teachers agree that fostering cognitive complexity requires a combination of challenging tasks, structured assessments, and ongoing support. These strategies help students develop their ability to handle complex ideas and articulate their

thoughts more clearly, contributing to their overall cognitive and communicative skills in cooperative learning contexts.

10. Confidence

Teachers testified that students feel more comfortable speaking in class when it is done through cooperative learning, as students have reinforcement of the model from other learners. Working on group projects rather than individual tasks can make some students more comfortable speaking and participating. Based on teachers' reports, collaborative learning greatly increases students' self-confidence when practicing English conversation. It has been found to improve confidence through the myriad of cooperative activities and helpful approaches in group work. Teachers observe that students who are shy (or too nervous to speak) quickly gain confidence and mastery in speaking skills using cooperative methods. Teacher A observes a marked increase in student confidence through cooperative learning, highlighting a case where a previously reserved student became more active in group discussions and she attributes this change to the *"validation of peers and the supportive group atmosphere,"* particularly evident during group debate activities. The supportive environment encouraged students in her class to take leadership roles and participate more actively. Teacher B also noted a visible improvement in student confidence following a group presentation task and she explained how students, including initially timid ones, transformed into more confident speakers. They credit this progress to the ability to rehearse in a low-pressure environment and being around friends who cheer them on. This growth is reflected through an increase in clarity and enthusiasm during presentations. Teacher C indicates that students have become much more talkative and confident, with role-plays used in cooperative learning. An example of this is a student who was incredibly anxious in her class about talking but gained much confidence when he saw other students completing similar tasks. Teacher C suggests that witnessing their

peers involved in activities builds students' self-confidence which facilitates their participation. Teacher D measures substantial gains in student self-confidence with assistance from a *"language buddy"* system.

Somewhat reluctant students initially showed increased confidence with practice and during peer feedback. Teacher D shares that this system lessens the fear of learners committing errors, thus students are encouraged to participate in classroom conversations. Teacher E observes a shift in students' confidence when working on group skits. In her class, a previously reserved student emerged as a leader, showing increased vocal participation and engagement in other activities. She attributes this boost in confidence to the supportive group setting, which allowed students to practice speaking and enhance their self-assurance. Teacher F noticed a rise in student confidence when students worked cooperatively and gave an example of a shy individual who turned into the leader of a group after participating in a speech contest. This group work and support from other peers was eventually enough to break down the confidence barriers for the student.

This implies that chances of cooperative learning creating a confident student are quite high, as confirmed by the teachers themselves. Recurring themes revolve around modifying shy students into more verbal speakers through group activities, such as but not limited to discussions in groups, presentations, or talking extemporaneously. Working in cooperative learning settings where there is a supportive and less threatening environment is ultimately associated with enhancing students' self-esteem. Teachers A, B, and E all suggested that peer validation and supportive group dynamic elements encouraged student confidence. According to them, students who may have been initially hesitant or reserved are better able to find their voices through interaction and group work. Teachers D and F both identify language buddy systems, the use of structured tasks to foster active speaking by students. It helps them

overcome their fear and build confidence through regular practice and peer support. In sum, teacher responses demonstrate that cooperative learning contributes to feelings of comfort and engagement in speaking for many students. The dual impact of friendliness from peers and cooperative tasks with structure both greatly aid students in their confidence to speak English.

11. Teacher's Support and Facilitation

According to the teachers, teacher support and facilitation were deemed particularly important in the success of cooperative learning. The involvement of teachers in structuring tasks, guiding interaction between groups, and providing feedback was observed to play a central role in the effective functioning of cooperative learning. Cooperative learning and teacher support/facilitation are a common thread throughout the practices of all six teachers. They detail different ways to maximise student engagement, offer personalised feedback, and cultivate a culture of learning. While they may employ different methods of instruction, all teachers can concur that facilitation is the key to cooperative learning. Teacher A stresses a multi-pronged approach to both support and facilitation. By "*tiering speaking activities so that more advanced students are doing discussion on higher-level topics while the beginners might just be saying dialogues."* The goal of this strategy is to provide space so that *"all students can be held accountable and have opportunities to share their thinking."* She uses *"purposeful one-on-one or small group meetings targeted to individual needs"* in which she gives *"formative feedback based on whether students are working toward meeting lesson goals."* To exhibit moderation in participation, Teacher A uses *"structured roles within groups"* and *"regular switch-around of groups",* which facilitates children working with different peers, and encourages children to build their confidence as group presenters. Teacher B focuses on creating a supportive environment through *"peer mentoring"* and *"scaffolded support."* She pairs students with varying skill levels so that *"more proficient students mentor their peers,"*

which helps both the mentors and less confident students. She uses *"sentence starters and vocabulary lists"* to assist with language structure and builds *"individualised feedback sessions"* to address progress and concerns. She shared examples of how she incorporates *"jigsaw activities"* and *"round-robin discussions"* to ensure balanced participation and engagement while using *"interactive games"* and *"peer evaluation"* to make learning enjoyable and reflective.

Teacher C uses targeted instruction and collaborative feedback. She sets *"clear guidelines of performance expectations"* and uses *"role-play exercises"* to simulate real-life scenarios. She supports balanced participation with *"group contracts" and "time-limited activities,"* and encourages critical engagement with *"talking sticks"* so that all her students can have an equal chance at speaking opportunities. Some of the methods she shared are *"audio recordings"* and *"feedback games"* to help students self-assess and improve their speaking skills, with a focus on *"reflective peer review sessions."* Teacher D supports her students by using language learning apps and technology designed to practice target skills. According to her giving *"positive feedback"* and creating a *"friendly and welcoming atmosphere"* in class leads to successful cooperative learning activities. For effective group work, she uses *"station rotation"* and *"student-led discussions,"* which promote active participation and rapport among students. Additionally, she provides support to her students through interactive feedback sessions generally. She gave an example of *"highlighted transcripts"* for detailed error correction, helping students understand and address their speaking issues. Teacher E explained that giving individualised feedback and skill development exercises are important. She starts with *"diagnostic tests"* to identify specific issues and develops *"individualised sets of exercises"* for targeted improvement. Additionally, she uses *"student-driven conferences"* to encourage self-assessment and goal-setting. Teacher E employs *"mock trials"* and *"fishbowl discussions"* to foster balanced participation and uses a *"feedback matrix"* and *"Flipgrid video*

feedback" for detailed and constructive feedback. Teacher F gives her students *"step-by-step instructions"* and *"feedback loops"* through mini-lessons. To ensure fair participation, she uses *"group check-ins"* and *"English language learning games."* Furthermore, she incorporates *"peer teaching"* and various feedback strategies, such as *"instant feedback"* and *"feedback workshops,"* to support and enhance student speaking development.

All teachers reflected on the importance of providing scaffolding and structured guidance for cooperative learning. Teachers A, B, and E underscore the practice of differentiation and providing feedback tailored to fit, noting that this caters to the various levels of the students which ensures that all can engage meaningfully. Teacher C and D highlighted the importance of structured activities and technology to encourage equitable participation and effective group collaboration. Management techniques as discussed by Teacher F and the interactive feedback add to the list of interventions to keep students engaged and being supported. Overall, teachers agree that effective cooperative group work needs differentiated instruction and personal feedback. This comprehensive support ensures that students can participate in group learning, facilitate the practicing of oral skills, and participate in the implementation of group tasks. Every teacher provides an encouraging space to learn with their own teaching strategy and with time these students become better at speaking the English language.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter synthesises the findings from both the student questionnaire and semi-structured teacher interviews to provide a holistic view of the role of cooperative learning in enhancing the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners. The analysis reveals that cooperative learning significantly improves student engagement, participation, and motivation, as reported by both students and teachers. Students noted gains in language accuracy, fluency,

pronunciation, and vocabulary, which were reinforced by peer support and constructive feedback during group activities. Teachers corroborated these observations, emphasizing the importance of well-structured tasks and active facilitation to ensure balanced participation and effective language practice. Both data sets highlighted the cognitive benefits of cooperative learning, such as enhanced critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. However, challenges such as inconsistent participation, varying proficiency levels, and the quality of peer feedback were also noted. The chapter underscores the alignment of these findings with established research.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, SUMMARY, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a comprehensive discussion by interpreting the findings from the student questionnaire and teacher interviews in light of the existing literature and theoretical frameworks on cooperative learning. This chapter will interpret these findings in the context of past and current research, highlighting their relevance to theoretical implications and practical applications. The discussion will explore how these results contribute to our understanding of cooperative learning's impact, provide actionable recommendations for educators to optimise their teaching practices, and offer guidance for policymakers to support the effective implementation of cooperative learning strategies. Additionally, the chapter will outline recommendations for future researchers to address identified gaps and further investigate the long-term effects of cooperative learning in diverse educational settings.

5.2 Discussion of results

5.2.1 Engagement and participation

The quantitative and qualitative data indicate a strong correlation between cooperative learning strategies and increased student engagement and participation in class activities. The quantitative findings reveal that a substantial majority of students actively participate in group discussions during cooperative learning sessions, with 86.7% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. Additionally, 87.5% of respondents believe that cooperative learning activities keep them engaged throughout the lesson. This aligns with the third quantitative statement, where 61.9% of students feel comfortable speaking in English in a group, although some neutrality and disagreement were observed.

The qualitative data further reinforce these findings, as all six teachers unanimously agree on the role of cooperative learning in enhancing student engagement. Teachers observed various indicators of active participation, including eagerness to engage in group discussions, asking questions, taking leadership roles, and helping peers. For instance, Teacher A notes, "Whenever we are having group discussions, I can see how eager students are to participate in them as well as their attitude towards working together," which reflects the high engagement levels. Teacher B corroborates this by assessing engagement through frequent student interactions and contributions during discussions, while Teacher D highlights the leadership roles taken on by more engaged students.

In light of past research, these findings align well with the work of Lucena and San Jose (2016), whose study also observed high levels of student engagement and confidence in cooperative learning environments. Lucena and San Jose's phenomenological research in the Philippines demonstrated that cooperative learning fosters increased interaction, particularly benefiting shy students. This mirrors the sentiments expressed by Teachers A and C, who emphasize the active participation of even the more reserved students. Furthermore, the Vietnamese study by Nguyen and Nguyen (2021) supports these findings, noting that cooperative learning enhances participation, achievement, and social skills, which are all crucial for ESL learners. Teachers in the Vietnamese context also valued the role of CL in motivating students and fostering collaboration, echoing the perceptions gathered from teachers in this research.

Moreover, the study by Pilataxi Minda (2022), which focused on Ecuadorian students, highlighted the role of cooperative learning in improving not just engagement but also critical speaking skills, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. The emphasis on role-plays and interactive group methods in that study resonates with Teacher C's observation of eye contact, active listening, and role-play as indicators of engagement. The findings of Adjal et

al. (2022) further confirm that cooperative learning can increase oral production and student involvement, thus validating the quantitative results in the current study, which show that 61.9% of students feel more comfortable speaking English in a group setting. In the studies reviewed, engagement and participation emerge as pivotal components in the effectiveness of cooperative learning (CL). Singh et al. (2020), and Prihamdani (2020), both highlight that methods such as Think-Pair-Share (TPS) and "Number Heads Together" significantly boost student engagement by fostering interactive and supportive learning environments, aligning with Johnson and Johnson's (1999) theoretical framework that CL methods enhance learner involvement through collaborative tasks.

The convergence of both qualitative and quantitative findings reflects key insights from early educational theorists like Vygotsky and Bandura. Vygotsky's Social Development Theory (1978) emphasizes the role of social interaction in cognitive development, positing that cooperative activities create a scaffold for students to learn from one another, enhancing participation and engagement. This is evident in the study's findings, where students actively collaborate and contribute to group tasks. Additionally, Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) highlights the importance of observation and modeling in learning behaviors, a concept mirrored in the role-plays and group dynamics noted by the teachers. As students observe peers and model speaking tasks within their groups, they enhance their oral proficiency and confidence. Both theories validate the centrality of cooperative learning in promoting engagement, which directly fosters speaking skills development in an ESL context.

Cooperative learning creates a supportive environment where students can scaffold each other's language skills, leading to more robust engagement and participation. This reflects Ramesh, Jenitha, and Sushma's (2023) argument that cooperative learning encourages inclusivity and fosters social and leadership skills, thereby reducing foreign language learning anxiety.

In terms of research objectives and questions, this discussion ties directly to the first research objective, which aims to evaluate the effectiveness of cooperative learning in enhancing speaking skills. The high levels of engagement and participation observed both quantitatively and qualitatively indicate that cooperative learning strategies significantly motivate students to participate and engage with speaking tasks. This also aligns with the first research question, "To what extent do cooperative learning strategies improve the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners?" The data suggest that cooperative learning does indeed promote more active involvement, which is essential for the development of speaking skills, as students need ample opportunities to practice speaking in a low-anxiety environment.

Furthermore, the qualitative data shed light on the role of teachers in facilitating these cooperative activities, linking back to the third research question. The teachers' methods of monitoring engagement and participation through observation, role-plays, and group dialogues illustrate the vital role they play in ensuring that students are actively involved in the learning process.

5.2.2 Motivation

The quantitative data reveals a generally positive perception of cooperative learning's impact on motivation among students. Specifically, 57% of respondents agree and 30.9% strongly agree that cooperative learning motivates them to improve their speaking skills, with a mean score of 4.12. Similarly, 57.4% of students agree and 27.7% strongly agree that it encourages them to set personal goals, supported by a mean score of 4.04. Additionally, 59.8% of participants agree and 19.3% strongly agree that cooperative learning encourages initiative in speaking tasks, although the mean score of 3.88 suggests a somewhat lower but still positive impact.

Qualitative data from teacher interviews further supports these findings, with all six teachers acknowledging that cooperative learning enhances student motivation. Teachers noted that students are more confident, less stressed, and more willing to take risks when working in groups. They emphasized the role of peer interactions in fostering motivation, although some challenges like unequal participation and feelings of being overshadowed were also recognized. Teachers A and B highlighted how cooperative learning reduces stress and inspires greater involvement, while Teacher C underscored the significance of peer feedback. Teachers D and E observed that students feel their contributions are valuable to the group's success, enhancing motivation, and Teacher F noted the positive influence of the social aspect of group work.

These findings align with theoretical frameworks and past research on motivation and cooperative learning. According to the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), intrinsic motivation is crucial for effective learning, and cooperative learning strategies support this by creating a collaborative environment that fosters autonomy and peer support. Ning and Hornby (2014) demonstrated that cooperative learning increases intrinsic motivation among students, a result supported by the present study's findings on improved student engagement and goal-setting. Similarly, the work of Johnson & Johnson (1999) and Slavin (1995) underscores the role of cooperative learning in enhancing student motivation through supportive peer interactions and increased autonomy. According to Johnson and Johnson (1999), learning that is carried out in groups makes students more responsible and take initiative to participate in their activities that are classroom-based activities. The positive response shown by the majority of the participants indicates that cooperative learning not only facilitates participation but also increases the willingness of the students to take up speaking tasks which corroborates with the existing literature on extending students' communication skills in ESL learners. In the same regard, Kagan (1994), underscores the fact that structured

cooperative learning enhances risks-taking and dialogues and therefore aids in the development of oral language acquisition. Additionally, Gillies (2006), found out that learners who practice cooperative learning take initiative since their peers provide feedback and support to them hence increasing their confidence in spoken English. These findings are in line with Long and Porter's (1985), Interactions hypothesis of Second Language Acquisition claiming that there is interaction in group work which makes it possible for the students to practice their speaking skills in real-life situations.

Furthermore, the positive effects of cooperative learning on motivation observed in this study are consistent with findings from Raba (2017) and Namaziandost et al. (2019), who reported enhanced motivation and participation due to cooperative learning techniques. Ehsan et al. (2019) also highlighted that cooperative learning significantly boosts motivation, aligning with the results of this study and supporting the argument that cooperative learning fosters a more engaging and supportive learning environment.

Both quantitative and qualitative data indicate that cooperative learning effectively enhances student motivation, corroborating existing theories and research on the benefits of collaborative learning environments. This alignment with past studies and theoretical frameworks reinforces the role of cooperative learning in fostering intrinsic motivation and active participation among students.

The findings from both quantitative and qualitative data underscore that cooperative learning is effective in enhancing student motivation, directly addressing the research objectives and questions. The significant percentage of students who feel motivated to improve their speaking skills and set personal goals through cooperative learning aligns with the objective of evaluating its effectiveness in enhancing speaking skills. Furthermore, the qualitative feedback from teachers reinforces the notion that cooperative learning fosters a

supportive environment, thus addressing the research question regarding the role of teachers in facilitating such motivational strategies. Teachers' observations of increased student engagement and risk-taking in language use align with the research question about challenges and opportunities in cooperative learning environments, demonstrating that while motivation is generally high, attention to potential issues like unequal participation is crucial for optimizing the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies.

5.2.3 Speaking skill development: language accuracy, fluency, pronunciation, intonation, and linguistic complexity

The data on speaking skill development through cooperative learning illustrates significant benefits in various aspects of language proficiency, as well as some areas where improvements could be further optimized. According to the quantitative data, a substantial majority of students perceive cooperative learning as beneficial in refining their language accuracy. Specifically, 79.1% of students agreed or strongly agreed that group work helps improve the accuracy of their spoken English, with a mean frequency score of 3.95. This finding resonates with Swain's (1985) output hypothesis, which emphasizes the role of interactive language use in correcting linguistic errors and enhancing language accuracy. Additionally, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory supports this by highlighting how social interactions within cooperative learning environments facilitate higher levels of language mastery. Dörnyei (1997) further underscores that the social and motivational aspects of cooperative learning encourage learners to use more accurate grammatical forms. This perspective is reinforced by Pica et al. (1987), who argue that group interactions provide essential input and output functions critical for developing speaking and listening skills.

Fluency in spoken English is another area where cooperative learning demonstrates clear benefits. With 80.2% of students either agreeing or strongly agreeing that cooperative learning activities enhance their fluency, and a mean score of 3.94, the data suggests that group

work creates an environment conducive to repeated practice and language use. This finding aligns with Swain's (1985) assertion that language production is crucial for fluency and is effectively supported by cooperative tasks. Long and Porter (1985) argue that cooperative learning improves both the quantity and quality of language used, while Kagan (1994) notes that such structures foster a low-anxiety environment, which further aids in the development of fluency. This aligns with previous research that emphasizes the role of group interaction in facilitating language practice (Grouws & Cebulla, 2000; Norton, 2000).

In terms of pronunciation, the data shows that 76.7% of students believe that cooperative learning positively impacts their pronunciation, with a mean score of 3.92. This is consistent with the findings of Lyster and Ranta (1997), who noted that peer feedback during cooperative tasks helps students self-correct and improve phonetic accuracy. Lightbown and Spada (2013) also support this by suggesting that the lower-pressure environment of group work enables learners to focus on pronunciation. The communicative approach further validates this by emphasizing the importance of authentic practice and feedback (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Regarding intonation, 74.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that cooperative learning helps them focus on correct intonation, with a mean frequency of 3.84. This supports the view that cooperative learning can enhance intonation skills through feedback and repeated practice in a supportive setting (Grouws & Cebulla, 2000; Norton, 2000). Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory and Lyster and Ranta's (1997) findings corroborate this by highlighting the role of group interactions in improving intonation through immediate feedback.

When it comes to linguistic complexity, the data indicates that while 60.8% of students felt more confident using complex sentences during cooperative tasks, with a mean frequency of 3.59, some students did not find significant improvement. This result aligns with research

indicating that collaborative activities can enhance the use of complex sentences through practice and peer feedback (Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Long, 1996). The interactionist theory suggests that social interactions in cooperative learning settings facilitate the development of complex language structures (Swain, 1985; Vygotsky, 1978).

The qualitative data from teacher interviews further supports these findings, emphasizing that cooperative learning positively impacts language accuracy, fluency, and pronunciation. Teachers highlighted the benefits of peer feedback and practice but also noted the necessity of teacher oversight to prevent the fossilization of mistakes. For instance, Teacher A observed significant improvements in fluency and accuracy but stressed the importance of monitoring peer corrections to ensure they are accurate. Similarly, Teacher B noted that while cooperative learning helps with pronunciation, careful management is needed to avoid incorrect corrections. Teachers C, D, and E also acknowledged the benefits of cooperative learning but pointed out that improvements vary based on task complexity and student engagement. Teacher F observed visible changes in language accuracy and pronunciation but noted variability in progress among students.

A comprehensive review of the literature highlights the significant impact of cooperative learning (CL) on various dimensions of speaking skill development, including language accuracy, fluency, pronunciation, intonation, and linguistic complexity. Alghamdi and Gillies (2013) demonstrated that CL enhances grammatical competence but noted that its effectiveness in writing requires additional teacher support. Al-Tamimi and Attamimi (2014) found improved speaking skills and positive shifts in attitudes. Kandasamy and Habil (2018) reported increased fluency and reduced stress in presentations among Malaysian students using CL, emphasizing the role of digital resources in boosting communication confidence. Alrayah (2018) revealed a 25.5% increase in oral fluency among Sudanese ELLs using CL techniques such as Jigsaw and Think-Pair-Share, highlighting significant gains over conventional

methods. Ozdemir and Yildirim (2020) showed substantial improvements in grammar, reading comprehension, and listening skills among 10th-grade students using CL, with high reliability in their assessment tools. Singh et al. (2020) observed enhanced fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary used in Malaysian ESL learners through the Think-Pair-Share strategy, addressing psychological barriers and improving speaking proficiency. Siddique et al. (2020) reported significant improvements in reading, listening, and grammar among 8th graders in Lahore using CL, supporting the notion that cooperative methods foster better academic outcomes. Pilataxi Minda (2022) highlighted students' preference for interactive methods such as role-plays, which improved pronunciation and fluency. Adjal et al. (2022) found that CL substantially enhanced speaking ability, aligning with past research on its efficacy. Guaranga Lema (2022) noted significant improvements in grammar, pronunciation, and interactive communication among young EFL learners using CL. Elsayed (2023) identified teaching methods and linguistic factors as key influences on speaking skill acquisition. Collectively, these studies affirm the positive impact of CL on various aspects of speaking skills, supporting Vygotsky's (1978) theory on interactive learning environments.

Overall, the alignment between the quantitative and qualitative data with the literature review reveals that cooperative learning strategies are effective in enhancing various aspects of speaking skills, including accuracy, fluency, pronunciation, and intonation. However, consistent monitoring and structuring of cooperative activities are crucial for maximizing these benefits and addressing potential challenges. The combined insights from the data and literature reinforce the role of cooperative learning in developing speaking skills while highlighting the need for ongoing teacher involvement to ensure effective implementation.

The findings on speaking skill development through cooperative learning reveal notable enhancements in language accuracy, fluency, pronunciation, intonation, and linguistic complexity, aligning closely with the research objectives and questions. Cooperative learning

strategies significantly impact various dimensions of speaking skills, as reflected in both quantitative and qualitative data. The substantial agreement among 79.1% of students that cooperative learning improves language accuracy, coupled with a mean score of 3.95, indicates that these strategies effectively address the research objective of evaluating the effectiveness of cooperative learning in enhancing speaking skills. This enhancement in accuracy aligns with Swain's (1985) output hypothesis, which underscores the role of interactive language use in correcting linguistic errors, thereby supporting the first research question on the extent of improvement in speaking skills.

Fluency, another crucial aspect, showed a high level of improvement, with 80.2% of students acknowledging that cooperative learning activities enhance their fluency (mean score of 3.94). This finding is pertinent to the research objective of assessing cooperative learning's impact on speaking skills and directly addresses the research question concerning the extent of this improvement. The positive impact on fluency aligns with Long and Porter's (1985) findings that cooperative learning fosters increased language use and practice, crucial for developing fluency.

The impact of cooperative learning on pronunciation, with 76.7% of students reporting improvements (mean score of 3.92), highlights its effectiveness in this area. This finding supports the research objective of evaluating the role of cooperative learning in developing speaking skills and answers the research question about specific skill enhancements. The alignment with Lyster and Ranta's (1997) observations on peer feedback further substantiates the effectiveness of cooperative learning in improving pronunciation.

Intonation, with 74.2% of students reporting enhanced skills (mean score of 3.84), reflects the positive influence of cooperative learning. This improvement aligns with the research objective of understanding how cooperative learning impacts various aspects of

speaking skills and directly relates to the research question about the extent of improvement. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory supports this by emphasizing the role of group interactions in refining intonation through feedback and practice.

The data on linguistic complexity, with 60.8% of students feeling more confident in using complex sentences (mean score of 3.59), suggests that while cooperative learning fosters some improvement, further efforts may be needed to enhance this aspect. This finding is relevant to the research objective of examining cooperative learning's impact on language complexity and provides insights into the challenges faced in this area, addressing the second research question about the challenges encountered by learners.

Qualitative insights from teacher interviews complement these findings, indicating that while cooperative learning significantly impacts language accuracy, fluency, and pronunciation, challenges remain in ensuring the accuracy of peer feedback and managing diverse student needs. Teachers emphasized the importance of ongoing supervision to prevent the perpetuation of errors and to tailor activities to varying levels of student proficiency. This aligns with the research objectives of identifying challenges in cooperative learning and the role of teachers in facilitating effective learning environments, addressing both the second and third research questions.

Overall, the data demonstrates that cooperative learning strategies effectively enhance various aspects of speaking skills, with significant improvements in language accuracy, fluency, pronunciation, and intonation. However, addressing challenges related to linguistic complexity and the variability in student progress highlights the need for careful implementation and teacher support. These findings align with the research objectives of evaluating the effectiveness of cooperative learning and exploring challenges and teacher roles, providing a comprehensive understanding of cooperative learning's impact on speaking skills.

5.2.4 Vocabulary usage

The quantitative data reveal that 56.7% of participants agree and 23.1% strongly agree that cooperative learning activities enhance their ability to learn new vocabulary effectively, indicating that 79.8% of students view cooperative learning as beneficial for vocabulary acquisition. The mean score of 3.93 supports the notion that cooperative learning is perceived positively in aiding vocabulary learning. According to Nation (2001), context-based learning within rich linguistic environments through collaborative activities is crucial for vocabulary acquisition. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory asserts that language development is a social endeavor supported by proximal development, while Swain's (1985) output hypothesis suggests that collaborative language production facilitates memory retention of new words. Cooperative learning enables students to practice challenging vocabulary in social interactions, which might be less accessible through traditional methods. Furthermore, 56% of participants agree and 20.2% strongly agree that cooperative learning helps them use a wider range of vocabulary when speaking, with a mean score of 3.86. This supports research indicating that cooperative learning stimulates speaking and allows students to interact with varied linguistic outputs, expanding their lexical range (Swain, 2000). Vygotsky's (1978) theory, alongside Nation's (2001) view on repeated exposure, underscores the effectiveness of cooperative learning in vocabulary acquisition. Long's (1996) interaction hypothesis also emphasizes that meaningful communicative activities and negotiation of meaning in groups enhance vocabulary learning. Additionally, 53.3% of students agree and 19.1% strongly agree that cooperative learning boosts their confidence in experimenting with new vocabulary during discussions, with a mean score of 3.78. This indicates that cooperative learning contributes to increased confidence in using new vocabulary, aligning with Long's (1996) interactionist language learning theory and Rod's (2003) view that cooperative environments encourage risk-

taking with language. Swain (1995) also highlights that language output in cooperative tasks helps students retain and refine new vocabulary through peer feedback.

Qualitative data show that cooperative learning significantly enhances vocabulary usage among students, particularly through group activities that promote new terms and concepts. Teachers observe improvements in vocabulary use during collaborative discussions and projects, although the extent varies based on activity structure, student engagement, and teacher guidance. For instance, Teacher A noted significant vocabulary expansion through group discussions, such as the use of environmental vocabulary in projects. Teacher B emphasized peer influence, with students adopting new expressions from their classmates. However, Teacher C observed that vocabulary improvements might not always be substantial, suggesting a need for explicit instruction. Teacher D noted potential challenges when activities lack structure or guidance. Teacher E observed that students often teach each other new words but also pointed out inconsistencies in vocabulary improvement and the need for targeted exercises. Teacher F reported only "some improvements" with limited vocabulary depth. Overall, while cooperative learning positively impacts vocabulary usage, its effectiveness is enhanced by explicit instruction and well-structured activities.

The literature supports these findings. Shafiee and Khavaran (2017) found that cooperative learning strategies, specifically the STAD method, significantly improve vocabulary outcomes compared to traditional methods. Yavuz and Arslan (2018) observed that cooperative learning enhances various language skills, including vocabulary, in high school students. Similarly, Ozdemir and Yildirim (2020) reported significant gains in vocabulary among students using cooperative learning. Singh et al. (2020) highlighted that strategies like Think-Pair-Share positively affect vocabulary acquisition, supporting Swain’s (1985) output hypothesis. Pilataxi Minda (2022) demonstrated that cooperative learning activities, such as dialogues and role-plays, significantly improve vocabulary. These findings align with Swain’s

(1985) view that cooperative interactions facilitate vocabulary retention and Aronson's (1978) Jigsaw method, which encourages the use of new words in context.

The results on vocabulary usage align closely with the research objectives and questions. Research objective 1 seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in enhancing the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners. The quantitative data indicate that a significant majority of students perceive cooperative learning as effective in acquiring new vocabulary and using a broader range of vocabulary when speaking (mean scores of 3.93 and 3.86, respectively). This supports the objective by demonstrating that cooperative learning strategies are beneficial for vocabulary acquisition, which is a critical component of speaking skills development.

Research Question 1, which focuses on the extent to which cooperative learning strategies improve speaking skills, is addressed by the positive student responses regarding vocabulary learning. The findings suggest that cooperative learning facilitates vocabulary acquisition, thus indirectly enhancing speaking skills through expanded vocabulary use and increased confidence in language production.

Research Questions 2 and 3 explore the challenges learners face and the role of teachers in facilitating cooperative learning. The qualitative data from teacher interviews provide insights into the variability in vocabulary improvement due to factors like activity structure and teacher guidance. Teachers' observations that cooperative learning positively impacts vocabulary usage, though with some limitations, highlight challenges such as inconsistent vocabulary depth and the need for explicit instruction. This aligns with Research Question 2 by identifying challenges in vocabulary development within a cooperative learning framework and supports Research Question 3 by underscoring the crucial role of teacher guidance in maximizing the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies.

Overall, the alignment between the data and research objectives/questions illustrates that while cooperative learning significantly benefits vocabulary acquisition, the effectiveness is enhanced by structured activities and teacher support, which directly impacts both vocabulary usage and speaking skills.

5.2.5 Social interaction and peer support

The quantitative data reveals that a majority of students perceive peer support and social interaction as integral to their learning process, particularly in developing their speaking skills. For instance, 61% of students agreed, and 17.9% strongly agreed, that they receive helpful feedback from their peers during group work. This corroborates Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which posits that learning is inherently social, with peer interactions playing a pivotal role in cognitive development. Peer feedback serves as scaffolding that helps learners identify and address their gaps in knowledge and language use. This result is aligned with Topping's (2009) argument that peer-assisted learning promotes critical thinking, as students not only receive but also provide feedback, making the learning process reciprocal. The qualitative data further reinforces this, as teachers emphasized how peer support aids in vocabulary development, pronunciation, and creative language use. Teachers like Teacher C noted, "It is good that kids help one another by teaching new words and correcting an accent," which directly reflects the potential of peer feedback in advancing language accuracy.

Additionally, 58.1% of students agreed and 24.6% strongly agreed that cooperative learning improves their social interaction skills in English. This finding is supported by Kagan's (1994) research, which suggests that structured group work enhances verbal interaction, thereby improving fluency. Long's (1983) Interaction Hypothesis also holds relevance here, as it proposes that exposure to more proficient peers allows for real-time feedback and output modification, key components in language development. The qualitative data echoes this

finding, as Teacher B highlighted how students gain confidence in voicing their opinions in English during group work: “They sometimes talk easier in a group setting or voice their opinion in English more confidently.” This suggests that cooperative learning provides a comfortable environment for students to practice and refine their speaking skills in real-world, low-pressure scenarios, which is particularly beneficial for language learners (Gillies, 2016). The data also aligns with Gillies' (2016) view that cooperative learning fosters positive social relationships, creating a community that facilitates language use in meaningful interactions.

Moreover, 60.3% of students agreed, and 17% strongly agreed, that their peers help them improve their speaking skills during cooperative learning sessions. This is further supported by the qualitative data, where teachers discussed the role of peer support in enhancing speaking abilities. For example, Teacher E mentioned, “Students who are good at speaking usually act as mentors for the less confident peers in collaborative projects,” suggesting that peer mentoring fosters leadership and linguistic development among students. This insight aligns with Swain’s (2000) Output Hypothesis, which stresses that language learners benefit from opportunities to produce language in a meaningful context, especially when receiving immediate feedback from peers. Similarly, Vygotsky’s (1978) Zone of Proximal Development underscores the importance of interaction with more knowledgeable peers, who can provide the necessary linguistic input for learners to progress in their language skills. Gokhale (1995) also supports this contention, noting that peer interaction in cooperative learning enhances both cognitive and linguistic outcomes through mutual reinforcement.

The literature review aligns with these findings. For instance, Raba (2017) demonstrated that Think-Pair-Share (TPS), a cooperative learning strategy, significantly enhances students' oral communication skills by reducing anxiety and promoting active participation. The positive impact of TPS on interaction is similarly echoed in Lyman's (1981) research, which argues that small group discussions work effectively to encourage student

engagement. Additionally, Alrayah's (2018) study on cooperative learning activities in Sudan found that students in cooperative learning environments exhibited reduced anxiety and enhanced communicative competence, which is consistent with the current study's findings on social interaction and peer support. These studies confirm that cooperative learning environments provide students with the opportunity to engage in meaningful social interactions that are critical for language acquisition.

The findings discussed above are closely aligned with the research objectives and questions guiding this study. The first objective, which aims to evaluate the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in enhancing the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners, is addressed through both quantitative and qualitative data that emphasize the role of peer support in improving speaking abilities. The high percentage of students who perceive peer feedback as helpful and the teachers' observations of its impact on pronunciation and vocabulary development demonstrate the positive outcomes of cooperative learning on speaking skills.

The second objective, which focuses on identifying challenges faced by 8th-grade ESL learners in a cooperative learning environment, is also partially addressed in the qualitative data. Teachers such as Teacher A and Teacher D highlighted the variability in peer support and the need for structured guidance, indicating that not all students benefit equally from peer interaction. This finding aligns with the second research question, which asks about the challenges learners encounter in improving their speaking skills within a cooperative learning environment.

Lastly, the third objective, examining the role of teachers in facilitating cooperative learning activities, is evident in the teachers' perspectives. While peer support plays a significant role, several teachers emphasized that its success depends on teacher guidance. Teacher D, for instance, noted that without proper instruction, peer attempts at support may not

be particularly helpful. This underscores the importance of the teacher's role in structuring and guiding cooperative learning activities, as indicated in the third research question.

5.2.6 Group dynamics and collaboration

The integration of cooperative learning strategies, particularly focusing on group dynamics and collaboration, has been found to play a pivotal role in improving language skills, as both quantitative and qualitative data from this research suggest. Group dynamics significantly influence student interactions and learning outcomes, making this theme central to understanding the effectiveness of cooperative learning in developing the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners. The findings from both data sets align with existing research and theoretical frameworks, further supporting the importance of group cohesion in cooperative learning environments.

Quantitative data reveals a strong consensus among students that group collaboration is effective. A total of 63% of students agreed, and 22% strongly agreed that they work well with group members, with a mean frequency of 4.01. This suggests that a large majority of students perceive their group interactions as productive. Similarly, 61.4% agreed, and 27.6% strongly agreed that cooperative learning helps foster positive relationships among classmates, with a mean of 4.11. These findings indicate that cooperative learning encourages peer interaction, which, in turn, promotes better learning outcomes. The perception of personal contributions being valued during group discussions was also highly positive, with 64.2% agreeing and 20.3% strongly agreeing, reinforcing the importance of mutual respect and recognition within the group. This sentiment aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social development, which posits that structured interpersonal exchanges enrich cognitive abilities and foster peer relationships. Moreover, the findings resonate with Deutsch's (1949) insights into cooperative environments promoting mutual help and positive social interactions. It also

aligns with principles from Johnson and Johnson (1999), emphasizing positive interdependence and individual accountability as crucial for successful group work.

The qualitative data from teacher interviews further supports these findings. Teachers unanimously agreed that well-functioning group dynamics lead to better language practice and outcomes. Teacher A emphasized the dual nature of group dynamics, noting that balanced participation fosters improvement, while poor dynamics hinder learning. Similarly, Teacher C connected effective group dynamics directly to better language practice, reinforcing the idea that collaboration within a group is crucial for language development. Conversely, Teachers B and D noted that dysfunctional groups, marked by dominant personalities or conflicts, could negatively impact learning outcomes. This dual nature of group dynamics, where they can either enhance or impede learning, is a recurring theme in both student and teacher data.

The findings from this study align with the literature review. Raba (2017) and Elsayed (2023) both underscore the positive impact of structured group interactions on language acquisition and peer relationships. They emphasize that motivational factors, classroom environments, and effective group dynamics significantly influence students' speaking skills development. Additionally, the work of Ramesh et al. (2023) supports these findings, highlighting the role of cooperative learning in fostering inclusivity, critical thinking, and leadership skills among learners. The studies by Ehsan et al. (2019) and Singh et al. (2020) validate the positive effects of cooperative learning on group cohesion and collaboration, reinforcing the theoretical frameworks of Johnson & Johnson (2009) and Tuckman's (1965) model of group development.

The findings align closely with existing literature on cooperative learning. Johnson and Johnson’s (1999) theory of cooperative learning emphasizes the importance of positive interdependence and individual accountability in group work. The quantitative data, which

shows a high mean frequency of collaboration and positive relationships, reflects this principle. According to Johnson and Johnson, students working in well-structured groups are likely to experience greater success due to their shared responsibility for each other's learning. This is further supported by Slavin's (1995) work, which highlights the significance of successful group interaction for learning outcomes. The qualitative data from teachers, who observed that well-functioning groups lead to better language practice, echoes Slavin's argument that group collaboration is essential for cooperative learning to be effective.

Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory, which emphasizes the role of collaborative learning in cognitive development, also supports these findings. The positive peer relationships reported in both the student questionnaire and teacher interviews are indicative of the benefits of social interaction within Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). As students collaborate with more capable peers, they receive scaffolding that enables them to develop their language skills more effectively. This idea is reinforced by Gillies (2003), who suggests that navigating group dynamics, solving problems, and providing feedback within cooperative groups enhances students' ability to work harmoniously with others.

Moreover, the idea of feeling valued within a group, as indicated by the quantitative data (64.2% agreed, 20.3% strongly agreed), aligns with Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory. This theory posits that intrinsic motivation and engagement are sustained when individuals perceive their contributions as valuable. The recognition and respect that students feel within group discussions, as shown in both quantitative and qualitative data, support this theory's assertion that personal value and group belonging are critical for motivation and learning.

The research aimed to explore how cooperative learning strategies influence the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners and to identify the challenges they face within these

environments. The findings for Theme 6 directly address the first research question: *To what extent do cooperative learning strategies improve the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners?* The data demonstrates that positive group dynamics and collaboration lead to better language practice, fluency, and accuracy, which are key indicators of speaking skill development. Teachers' observations that well-organized groups contribute to significant language improvements further confirm that cooperative learning enhances speaking skills.

The second research question, which focuses on the challenges encountered by ESL learners, is also partially addressed by this theme. While most students report positive experiences, a small percentage (1.6% disagree, 2.4% strongly disagree) express dissatisfaction with group collaboration. Teachers also noted that poor group dynamics, such as conflicts or dominant personalities, could impede learning. This highlights that although cooperative learning is generally effective, challenges in group dynamics remain a significant factor that can hinder the success of cooperative tasks.

Finally, the third research question—*What is the role of teachers in planning and conducting cooperative learning activities?*—is reflected in teachers' emphasis on managing group dynamics. Teachers play a crucial role in organizing groups to ensure balanced participation and collaboration, as demonstrated in the qualitative data. Teacher F's observation that encouragement within groups fosters motivation and peer support underscores the importance of teacher facilitation in creating a positive group dynamic.

The discussion of group dynamics and collaboration reveals that cooperative learning strategies are highly effective in promoting student collaboration, peer relationships, and individual contributions. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative data confirms the importance of group dynamics in influencing language practice and skill development. The findings are supported by established theories, including Johnson and Johnson's cooperative

learning principles, Vygotsky's social development theory, and Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory. The research objectives are met by demonstrating how group dynamics contribute to the development of speaking skills while also identifying challenges that need to be addressed for cooperative learning to be fully effective.

5.2.7 Critical thinking development

The quantitative data reveals a strong perception among students that group activities significantly enhance their critical thinking skills when speaking in English. Specifically, 85% of respondents, including 61.9% who agreed and 23.1% who strongly agreed, support this view, while 12.5% remained neutral, and a small percentage expressed disagreement. The mean score of 4.06 reflects a general consensus that cooperative learning activities are beneficial for fostering critical thinking. This finding is consistent with Johnson and Johnson's (1999) theories on cooperative learning, which argue that such strategies facilitate higher-order thinking through problem-solving and peer interactions. Vygotsky's (1978) social constructionist theory supports this by emphasizing that critical thinking is enhanced through social interactions, while Slavin (1995) highlights the importance of engaging with multiple perspectives in cooperative settings. Gokhale (1995) also reinforces that justifying opinions in group tasks improves critical thinking. The nature of group activities, which promotes cognitive engagement and the integration of diverse opinions, aligns with these theories, underscoring the value of cooperative learning in developing critical thinking skills.

Further supporting this, 86.2% of students, with 60.7% agreeing and 25.5% strongly agreeing, believe that cooperative learning encourages deeper thinking about discussed topics. This high level of agreement, reflected in a mean frequency of 4.14, is aligned with theories suggesting that collaborative tasks promote advanced cognitive processes and reflection (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Vygotsky's cognitive development theory (1978) also supports

this, suggesting that peer interactions stimulate more elaborate processing and deeper understanding. The positive feedback corroborates earlier studies that associate cooperative learning with enhanced critical thinking and understanding (Slavin, 1995).

The data also indicates that 80.5% of students, including 57.6% who agreed and 22.9% who strongly agreed, feel that cooperative learning improves their ability to articulate their thoughts clearly during group tasks. With a mean score of 3.96, this finding reflects general agreement on the enhancement of verbal communication skills through cooperative activities. This result aligns with Ellis's (2008) interactionist theory, which posits that linguistic patterns develop within a social context. Brown (2014) supports this by suggesting that collaborative work aids learners in expressing their thoughts more clearly. Additionally, feedback from peers during group work, as noted by Gatbonton and Segalowitz (2005) and Dornyei (2001), contributes to refining speaking skills. The collaborative dialogue inherent in such activities encourages clear structuring of ideas, which is crucial for effective communication (McCafferty et al., 2006).

Qualitative data from teacher interviews further reinforces the quantitative findings. Teachers universally agree that cooperative learning promotes critical thinking. Teacher A notes that group activities requiring students to express opposing opinions and engage in persuasive arguments enhance critical engagement with the language. Teacher B emphasizes that even informal peer commentary fosters deeper thinking. Teacher C highlights that while cooperative learning generally has a positive effect, its success depends on structured guidance and task nature, as not all students consistently apply critical thinking. Teacher D points out that group tasks involving analysis and evaluation lead to improved critical thinking, attributing this to exposure to diverse perspectives. Teacher E supports that structured activities like peer reviews and debates stimulate critical thinking, emphasizing the need for proper guidance.

Teacher F highlights the role of problem-solving tasks in encouraging students to explore various solutions and justifications, enhancing their critical thinking skills.

Overall, the consensus among teachers is that cooperative learning effectively fosters critical thinking, particularly when tasks involve analysis, reflection, and argumentation. The variability in effectiveness, depending on group dynamics and task design, aligns with previous studies and theories suggesting that cooperative learning environments can enhance cognitive complexity and problem-solving abilities (Ehsan et al., 2019; Prihamdani, 2020).

The data on critical thinking development within cooperative learning contexts aligns closely with existing literature and addresses the research objectives and questions of this study. The quantitative findings, indicating that a substantial majority of students perceive cooperative learning as enhancing their critical thinking skills, corroborate the conclusions of Essien (2015), who found that cooperative group work promotes effective learning and critical thinking in ESL contexts. Essien's study, although focusing on early childhood education, similarly highlighted the positive impact of group activities on cognitive engagement, reflecting the importance of structured participation and task design. This supports the first research objective of evaluating the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in enhancing speaking skills, as the development of critical thinking is intricately linked to improved language competence and problem-solving abilities.

Furthermore, the qualitative data, which suggests that cooperative learning activities promote critical thinking through structured tasks and peer interactions, echoes the findings of Lucena and San Jose (2016). Their research demonstrated that cooperative learning enhances communication and critical thinking among students, particularly shy learners, through increased interaction and engagement. This aligns with the second research question, which explores the challenges ESL learners face in developing speaking skills within cooperative

learning environments. The emphasis on task-related work and structured guidance in their study reinforces the importance of effective implementation and teacher support, as noted in the qualitative responses of the teachers in this study.

Additionally, Ramesh, Jenitha, and Sushma (2023) highlight the development of critical thinking skills through cooperative language learning, emphasizing the role of structured group interactions. Their review supports the notion that cooperative learning environments foster critical thinking and alleviate language learning anxiety, aligning with the third research question concerning the role of teachers in facilitating these activities. The findings from this study affirm that teachers' roles in guiding and structuring group tasks are crucial for maximizing the cognitive and communicative benefits of cooperative learning.

Lastly, Ehsan et al. (2019) and Prihamdani (2020) underscore the cognitive benefits of cooperative learning, particularly its impact on critical thinking and problem-solving. These studies align with the observation that cooperative learning enhances cognitive complexity and higher-order thinking, addressing the overarching research objective of assessing the impact of cooperative learning on speaking skills. The integration of these insights into the analysis highlights how cooperative learning not only promotes critical thinking but also supports overall language development and academic achievement, thus providing a comprehensive understanding of its role in enhancing speaking skills among 8th-grade ESL learners.

By demonstrating that cooperative learning fosters deeper cognitive engagement, the study addresses the first research question concerning the extent to which these strategies improve speaking skills. Additionally, the challenges faced by learners in applying critical thinking, as noted in the qualitative data, connect to the second research question about obstacles in developing speaking skills within a cooperative learning environment. The variability in student engagement and task structure highlighted by teachers also informs the

third research question, which investigates the role of teachers in facilitating effective cooperative learning. Overall, the alignment of these findings with the research objectives and questions underscores the comprehensive impact of cooperative learning on critical thinking and speaking skills, emphasizing the importance of well-structured group activities and teacher support in achieving the desired educational outcomes.

5.2.8 Overcoming challenges and barriers

The discussion on overcoming challenges and barriers within cooperative learning reveals a complex interplay between student perceptions and teacher interventions, aligning closely with the literature reviewed. The quantitative data indicates that a significant portion of students find cooperative learning effective in overcoming their fear of speaking in English. With 80% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that cooperative learning helps them overcome this fear, and a mean frequency of 3.95, it is clear that this approach is seen as beneficial in mitigating anxiety associated with speaking in English. This aligns with the findings of Singh et al. (2020), who emphasize that cooperative learning can help reduce students' fear of speaking by fostering a supportive environment. This finding is in agreement with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory where social interaction decreases the level of anxiety, supporting language acquisition (Vygotsky, 1978). The peer-related nature of cooperative learning environments also mirrors findings by Dörnyei (2005), that peer support and collaborative activities reduce language anxiety. It offers a safe interactive space since the learners can freely practice their English in cooperative learning mode and it is expected that by minimising fears they start to develop confidence in speaking. The nature of cooperative learning activities, which involves group work and peer feedback can contribute to reducing this fear by creating a low-anxiety atmosphere in which learners feel that errors are a natural part of the language-learning process (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). In addition, regular praise and interaction with peers deter anxiety and facilitate more willingness to speak in English

(Young, 1991). This is because this supportive environment not only alleviates the fear but also improves overall communication skills.

73.6% of participants out of which 53.4% agreed and 20.2% strongly agreed, find it easier to express themselves during group activities compared to individual tasks. This predilection for engaging in a team rather than individual task aligns well with the ethos of cooperative learning and social constructivist paradigms. As found by Johnson and Johnson (1999), cooperative learning environments facilitate learners to vocalise their ideas openly more often, enabling a chance of immediate response, and further developing their speaking skills. Vygotsky's theory also assumes that collaborative work environments create better communication and idea-sharing than individualistic settings (Vygotsky, 1978). The results indicated that working in groups seems to promote a more supportive and communicative culture as is typical of the benefits associated with cooperative learning when also referring to L2 language use & production. Students are more willing to express their ideas in group work because the effort is a combined one and does not have always a bearing on how individual tasks do (Slavin, 1995). This collaboration requires a dialogue that at once affords an individual responsibility of thought to interact with others but also enables a nuanced expression of complex ideas more manageable than when working alone (Gokhale, 1995).

Additionally, 56.5% of students reported that group work allows them to practice speaking without feeling judged, reflecting a general agreement that cooperative learning creates a less intimidating setting for language practice. This observation is consistent with Brown's (2014) perspective, which advocates for interactive methods that address language learning challenges by creating safe spaces for students to express themselves. Completing a task as part of a group can work to alleviate feelings of being judged, not only because students share responsibility for performance and outcomes with one another (Slavin, 1995), but also

because this type of work is done in an informal setting. The existence of an organised group setting reduces perceptions that the work is isolating and has a one-to-one accountability relation, which can reduce anxiety arising from fear of being judged or evaluated negatively by others. (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Although a relatively small proportion of them disagree with others, overall scores indicate that some Pakistani students experience discomfort or perceived judgment by peers during group activities. This is consistent with the peer dynamics and perceived evaluation literature in educational contexts. Dörnyei (2005), agrees that fear of negative evaluation can discourage student participation and lead to a limited use of language. Moreover, Ellis (2008), claims that a favourable learning environment is essential as it reduces anxiety and aids effective communication. The result highlights the importance of creating a non-judgmental and supportive group environment for educators to reduce these concerns, and promote participation. A significant majority of participants 62.6% agreeing and 16.3% strongly agreeing believe that group activities are effective in addressing language proficiency gaps among classmates. These findings confirm that cooperative learning contexts are suitable for language improvement because of their peer-oriented support and collaborative problem-solving environments designed to address diverse individual requirements. They are in line with Vygotsky's (1978), social constructivist theory of cognitive development, which states the importance of peer interaction and cooperation for learning, and Johnson and Johnson (1999), further suggest in their research that the use of cooperation strategies enhance positive interdependence, which results from weaker ELL students contributing to native English speaking student success on a jigsaw type activity forcing them into each other's role when assisting with new content. Students with higher language skills can model proper use of the target language for those whose understandings are still developing, and students at lower levels receive exposure to more advanced structures authentically (Slavin, 1995). This shared

strategy will help to create a community of learners where students can support each other, building on one another's language skills and compensating for deficiencies over time.

58.1% of respondents agreed and 18.3% strongly agreed that cooperative learning helps reduce inequalities in participation among students. This is consistent with studies indicating that cooperative learning can help to establish an egalitarian classroom by increasing the participation of all students. At an abstract level, this confirms broader group interaction principles described by Slavin (1995), who builds much of his cooperative learning models around the idea that structured collaborations help neutralise engagement gaps between students. Additionally, the results echo Gillies (2003), who contended that cooperative learning strategies have positive impacts on individuals promoting equal participation and social inequalities among peers within educational settings. According to the theory of cooperative and competition by Deutsch (1949), cooperative learning assigns roles to teams, requiring all students to participate in the activity regardless of academic or social status (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). The structure in student groups diminishes participation inequalities and guarantees that every one of the students will have a voice as well and give their commitment to achieving group objectives.

The qualitative data from the teacher interviews highlights specific barriers faced by students, such as lack of confidence, uneven participation, and difficulties with pronunciation and vocabulary. Teachers' strategies to overcome these barriers are multifaceted. For instance, Teacher A's focus on creating a "safe space" aligns with the need for supportive environments highlighted by Singh et al. (2020) and Prihamdani (2020). This approach helps address the psychological barriers identified in the literature, such as lack of confidence. Teacher B's emphasis on pronunciation exercises and vocabulary development echoes the need for targeted linguistic support, a challenge noted by Alghamdi & Gillies (2013) and Wood (1998). These

strategies are crucial for addressing the gaps in language proficiency and ensuring that all students can participate effectively in cooperative learning activities.

Furthermore, Teacher C's use of tactical grouping and differentiated tasks to address varying proficiency levels reflects the findings of Gillies (2008), who emphasized the importance of structuring group work to ensure equitable participation. Similarly, Teacher D's focus on creating small, comfortable group settings and structured roles mirrors the strategies recommended by Ehsan et al. (2019) for enhancing student engagement and overcoming passive learning. Teacher E's establishment of clear group roles and rotation of responsibilities to prevent dominance by more confident students is a practical application of the principles discussed by Singh et al. (2020), aiming to promote balanced participation. Teacher F's approach to vocabulary limitations through word study tasks and vocabulary lists addresses the linguistic challenges noted in the literature, providing students with the tools they need to express themselves more effectively.

Overall, the integration of these findings aligns with the research objectives and questions by demonstrating that cooperative learning not only helps overcome specific challenges but also supports overall speaking proficiency development. The data shows that while cooperative learning offers a valuable strategy for addressing barriers, its effectiveness is enhanced by targeted teacher interventions. This supports the research question concerning the role of cooperative learning in improving speaking skills and highlights the importance of addressing challenges such as confidence, participation, and linguistic barriers through well-planned educational strategies.

5.2.9 Cognitive complexity

Cooperative learning (CL) plays a significant role in enhancing cognitive complexity among students, as indicated by both quantitative and qualitative data. According to the quantitative data, a substantial majority of students—56.5% agreeing and 22% strongly agreeing—believe that cooperative learning helps them connect ideas and organize their thoughts more logically while speaking in English (mean score = 3.94). This finding lends support to social constructivist accounts of learning which emphasise the enriching effects of co-action on cognitive processes. Cooperative learning environments allow students to discuss and give feedback, which in turn helps them organise their thoughts through practicing articulation (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). In addition, Vygotsky (1978), stipulates that cognitive development has a social origin and states that "meaningful collaboration" contrives ideas in the mind. Cooperative learning not only facilitates verbal interaction but also aids in connecting various ideas in a more coherent and organised manner, particularly in the context of speaking English. While talking to others about their ideas students can discern if what they have said makes sense and fits in somewhere during the process of clarification (Gillies, 2016). This regular discussion leads to better comprehension and more creative articulation, as the students try to explain their ideas through teamwork which helps in developing linguistic skills amongst them while supporting cognitive growth.

This aligns with the finding that 62.6% of respondents agree, and 17.5% strongly agree that group discussions aid in exploring and expressing complex ideas effectively in English (mean score = 3.90). This is well in line with previous studies that show the cognitive and communicative advantages of group discussions. According to the constructivist theory proposed by Piaget (1976), learners in groups are confronted with complex concepts through collaborative interaction which allows them to discuss and elaborate on complicated subjects more thoroughly thus improving their ability for intricate ideas conveyance. Derryberry and Tharp (1998), argue that collaboration with peers is a crucial means of cognitive development

as well as an important avenue for each child's experience in language. Group discussions enable students to not only explore difficult concepts but also express them in detail using English terms as they elaborate on their ideas and discuss the reasons behind an argument or question. Vygotsky's (1978), sociocultural theory confirms this even further, arguing that social interaction is central to the progression of cognitive functions because it promotes language development with dialogue and feedback. Mercer and Howe (2012), indicate that group discussions are a tool for garnering criticality as well as providing an engaging platform where students do not just gain proficiency in their language but also have the opportunity to test out, share, and then further develop their thoughts. These results underscore the perceived efficacy of CL in fostering cognitive processes such as logical thinking and idea organization, which are critical for effective communication.

The qualitative data from teachers further elucidates how cooperative learning impacts cognitive complexity. Teachers emphasized that CL activities, such as problem-solving tasks, role-plays, and debates, significantly contribute to cognitive development by promoting higher-order thinking skills. For instance, Teacher A's use of complex assignments involving global issues and Teacher B's role-plays requiring multifaceted decision-making reflects the application of cognitive complexity theories in practice. Teacher C's use of debates and brainstorming activities also supports the development of higher-order thinking by challenging students to articulate and defend complex ideas. Additionally, Teacher D's project-based learning and Teacher E's use of case studies and reflective journaling demonstrate structured approaches to evaluating and enhancing cognitive skills.

The alignment of these findings with the literature is evident in the works of Ehsan et al. (2019) and Piaget (1976). Ehsan et al. (2019) noted that CL promotes cognitive complexity by engaging students in collaborative problem-solving, which mirrors Piaget's theory of cognitive development through interactive learning. The focus on deep processing and

cognitive engagement in CL is supported by studies highlighting the benefits of collaborative problem-solving activities in enhancing cognitive complexity (Singh et al., 2020; Alghamdi & Gillies, 2013). These studies emphasize that CL provides a platform for students to tackle complex tasks collectively, thereby fostering cognitive skills and critical thinking.

In relation to the research objectives, which include evaluating the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in enhancing speaking skills and identifying the challenges faced, the findings on cognitive complexity are crucial. They illustrate how CL not only supports the development of speaking skills but also enhances students' ability to handle complex information and tasks. This directly addresses the research question about the role of cooperative learning in improving students' cognitive abilities and their effectiveness in articulating complex ideas.

Overall, the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data supports the conclusion that cooperative learning significantly contributes to cognitive complexity. By providing opportunities for complex problem-solving, collaborative discussions, and structured assessments, CL helps students develop higher-order thinking skills essential for effective communication and cognitive development. These findings align with the literature on cognitive complexity and cooperative learning, confirming the role of CL in fostering a deeper understanding and articulation of complex ideas.

5.2.10 Confidence

The quantitative data indicates that cooperative learning activities significantly enhance students' confidence in speaking English. A combined 83% of participants agree or strongly agree that their confidence has improved through cooperative tasks, demonstrating that these activities have a positive impact on student self-assurance. With a mean score of 4.01, it is evident that most students believe cooperative learning plays a role in building their

confidence. This is consistent with Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (1977), which proposed that confidence is created through experience and social interaction. As well, Vygotsky's (1978), social-cultural theory elaborates that collaborative activities provide an appropriate setting for learners to build their self-confidence through interaction and feedback from peers. Cooperative learning provides a low-stress environment for practicing language in small groups, which allows students to start building their confidence in speaking English with other peers who can give them useful feedback. Slavin (1995), suggests that cooperative learning creates an environment in which students feel comfortable and safe to engage with the new language by making it more risk-free. Furthermore, research carried out by Gokhale (1995), suggests that the cooperative nature of group work supports both language and communication skills.

Similarly, 82.1% of students agree or strongly agree that they feel more self-assured when presenting their ideas in English during group discussions, further suggesting that the collaborative environment of group tasks fosters confidence. The mean score of 3.92 supports the conclusion that students generally feel more confident when engaging in these activities. This is in line with the theory of "communicative competence," suggested by Canale and Swain (1980), that confidence and fluency are built through social interaction in practice conditions. The findings are further consistent with social constructivist theory, which posits that learning collaboratively helps the students to perceive themselves as more effective and confident (Vygotsky, 1978). They give students a perfect chance to shape their opinions (in the new language) and express them — which helps to build confidence. Dörnyei (2005), argues that collaborative learning removes the anxiety related to language learning present in solo settings; suggesting social setting allows learners to take a more relaxed stance towards expression. In addition, the findings from Gokhale (1995), suggest that group discussions are useful for active involvement and engagement of students and help them to present their opinion in a foreign

language. Their anxiety can be decreased by its interactive nature in which they become confident yet proficient in speaking a second/foreign language such as English.

Qualitative data from teacher interviews supports these findings. Teachers consistently observe increased confidence among students during cooperative learning activities. Teacher A highlights how a previously reserved student became more active in group discussions, attributing this shift to the validation and support of peers during group tasks. Teacher B recounts how a group presentation task transformed timid students into more confident speakers, attributing this change to the less intimidating, supportive atmosphere provided by the group setting. Teachers C and D emphasize the role of role-plays and peer feedback in helping students gain confidence, while Teachers E and F note how specific strategies like the "language buddy" system and leadership opportunities within groups further encourage self-assurance. The common theme across all teachers is that cooperative learning provides a nurturing, non-threatening environment that enables students to practice and build their confidence.

The data aligns closely with the literature. Lucena and San Jose (2016) found that cooperative learning promotes student engagement and builds confidence in speaking, particularly among shy learners. Their study, which involved detailed observations and focus group discussions, revealed that learners felt more comfortable engaging in group activities, which mirrors the confidence boost observed in the current study. Similarly, Raba's (2017) study on the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique demonstrated that cooperative learning increases self-confidence, particularly through structured discussions that encourage participation and reduce communication anxiety. This is consistent with the findings from Johnson and Johnson's (1999) cooperative learning framework, which highlights the importance of peer support and positive group dynamics in enhancing student confidence.

Astuti and Lammers (2017) also explored how cooperative learning fosters confidence by providing structured opportunities for students to use the target language in a supportive environment. Their multi-case study in an Indonesian secondary school showed that students became more accountable and confident in expressing their ideas, which is echoed in Teacher D's observation about the "language buddy" system. Similarly, Kandasamy and Habil (2018) found that cooperative learning fosters confidence and fluency among lower secondary students, especially when digital resources are integrated into the learning process. This aligns with the present findings, where teachers observed that peer interaction and practice in a less intimidating group setting led to notable increases in student confidence.

Further, Singh et al. (2020) highlighted how the TPS strategy helps weak ESL learners overcome psychological barriers to speaking, which include a lack of confidence. Their study demonstrated that through structured collaboration, students gained self-assurance in their ability to speak fluently and use vocabulary effectively, which aligns with the improvements in confidence observed in the current study. These results are further supported by the social learning theory of Bandura (1997), which emphasizes the importance of peer interactions and positive reinforcement in building self-efficacy and confidence. Cooperative learning creates a social context in which students feel encouraged to take risks, learn from their peers, and improve their speaking abilities through collective effort.

The quantitative and qualitative findings from this research align well with past literature on cooperative learning. Both sets of data show that cooperative learning significantly enhances student confidence, with peer support, structured tasks, and opportunities for practice identified as key contributing factors. These findings support the research objective of evaluating the effectiveness of cooperative learning in boosting speaking skills, as the increase in confidence is a crucial precursor to improved language proficiency. Furthermore, the positive impact on confidence addresses the research question regarding the challenges

students face, as cooperative learning helps them overcome anxiety and fear, facilitating greater participation and language use. By connecting these findings to established theories and research, the present study underscores the value of cooperative learning in creating an environment conducive to both confidence-building and language development.

5.2.11 Teacher's support and facilitation

The quantitative and qualitative data gathered on the role of teacher support and facilitation in cooperative learning, alongside the literature review, provide a comprehensive view of how teacher involvement influences the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in enhancing ESL learners' speaking skills. The analysis aligns with key theories and prior research, underscoring the importance of teacher support in achieving successful outcomes in cooperative learning environments.

The quantitative data reveals that a substantial majority of students believe teacher facilitation positively impacts their English-speaking skills. Specifically, 64.9% of respondents agreed, and 20% strongly agreed that teacher facilitation during cooperative learning activities is beneficial for improving their English-speaking abilities. This consensus reflects the significant role teachers play in guiding and enhancing students' learning experiences, as supported by the mean score of 4.01. This finding aligns with the research by Ehsan et al. (2019), which emphasized the effectiveness of cooperative learning (CL) in improving both language skills and motivation, particularly when supported by effective teacher facilitation (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Slavin, 2014). The findings are consistent with Vygotsky's (1978), ZPD principle that the most productive context for learning is through guided interaction and support from an expert. Also, the data indicates that teacher participation and purposeful guidance are essential to facilitating cooperative learning work for students (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976), and help provide them with supportive means of increasing their language

performances. Teacher facilitation supports not just group activities but also feedback and prompts that steer students in the direction of accurate language use. According to research conducted by Gillies (2006), teachers who proactively track and help student interactions during collaborative learning significantly improve students' fluency and language accuracy. Moreover, the scaffolding provided by a teacher facilitates practice and enhances participation enabling learners to communicate more with peers in a low-anxiety context (Dörnyei, 2005).

Similarly, the feedback provided by teachers during group activities is viewed positively by 61.9% of respondents who agree and 21.1% who strongly agree. The mean score of 3.95 indicates general agreement among students regarding the usefulness of the feedback received. This supports the notion that targeted and constructive feedback is crucial for language development, as noted by Nguyen and Nguyen (2021), who found that effective feedback and support are essential for the successful implementation of cooperative learning strategies. These findings are in line with the tenets of formative assessment and purposeful feedback for constructive growth (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Formative assessment strategies are one way to do this and good feedback is key in supporting students as they develop over time ensuring appropriate trajectories of learning. When working in groups, teachers provide feedback that is both prompt and product-oriented to help guide student interaction; they also make certain that students remain on task. Feedback from teachers can clear misunderstandings, develop students' language use, and encourage deeper thinking about the content. According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), quality feedback facilitates learning by providing students with specific guidance on how to improve, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of cooperative learning activities.

Regarding the strategies employed by teachers, 41.6% of respondents agreed, and another 41.6% strongly agreed that these strategies improve their speaking skills, with a mean score of 4.17. This substantial agreement underscores the effectiveness of diverse instructional

strategies in enhancing language skills, resonating with findings from Prihamdani (2020), who highlighted the positive impact of cooperative learning methods like "Number Heads Together" on speaking skills. The data suggests that well-designed strategies are instrumental in fostering language proficiency, consistent with the theoretical frameworks advocated by Johnson & Johnson (1999) and Slavin (1995). The findings correspond with research on how instructional strategies influence language learning. For example, research suggests that well-designed pedagogical approaches particularly those with active student involvement and individualized feedback, can lead to substantial gains in language proficiency (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). The high agreement levels in the data emphasise the need to use effective teaching strategies to promote language development in cooperative learning settings.

Various other cooperative learning strategies have been found to aid in the development of student's English speaking ability as well, through providing practice and immediate feedback. For example, the Jigsaw technique is beneficial for students speaking skills because it improves interaction and collaboration (Aronson et al., 1978). Think-Pair-Share provides students an opportunity to formulate their ideas before speaking, and it helps them to practise before sharing with a larger group (Lyman, 1987). Furthermore, group discussions and peer teaching contribute to providing a positive support setting for students in which they can develop more effective oral communication skills (Gillies, 2003). These strategies foster language proficiency and effective communication, enhancing learning experiences that support active participation (Slavin, 1995).

The qualitative data from teacher interviews provides a deeper understanding of how teacher support and facilitation manifest in practice. Teachers A through F collectively emphasize the importance of differentiated instruction, individualized feedback, and structured group activities in enhancing cooperative learning outcomes. Teacher A's use of tiered activities and individualized feedback aligns with the findings of Alghamdi and Gillies (2013),

who stressed that tailored instruction and teacher training are critical for maximizing the benefits of cooperative learning. This approach ensures that students' varying needs are addressed, fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Teacher B's focus on peer mentoring and scaffolded support echoes the strategies identified by Ehsan et al. (2019), who found that cooperative learning environments, enriched with peer interactions and support, effectively enhance speaking skills and motivation. Similarly, Teacher C's use of role-play and feedback games aligns with the recommendations of Gonfa (2023), who highlighted the need for engaging and interactive methods to optimize cooperative learning outcomes.

Teacher D's integration of technology and individualized support is in line with Nguyen and Nguyen (2021), who noted that technological tools and personalized feedback are beneficial in overcoming practical challenges and improving student engagement. Teacher E's use of diagnostic tests and targeted exercises reflects the critical role of individualized assessments in enhancing language skills, supporting the findings of Elsayed (2023) regarding the importance of teacher support and instructional methods in developing speaking abilities.

Teacher F's emphasis on management strategies and interactive feedback complements the broader consensus that effective facilitation requires a combination of structured guidance and responsive feedback, as noted by Sharan (1994). This comprehensive approach to facilitation ensures that students remain engaged and benefit from cooperative learning activities.

The findings from both quantitative and qualitative data underscore the pivotal role of teacher support and facilitation in cooperative learning, aligning with the broader literature on the topic. Alghamdi and Gillies (2013) emphasize the necessity of teacher training for the effective implementation of cooperative learning strategies, a sentiment reflected in the

observed importance of facilitation in both student responses and teacher practices. The positive impact of teacher feedback and instructional strategies, as indicated by the data, supports Ehsan et al.'s (2019) and Prihamdani's (2020) findings on the benefits of teacher involvement in enhancing language skills.

Nguyen and Nguyen's (2021) exploration of teachers' perceptions and practices highlights the need for systematic support and effective classroom management, reinforcing the importance of tailored teacher support in optimizing cooperative learning outcomes. Additionally, Gonfa (2023) and Elsayed (2023) highlight the challenges and practical considerations associated with cooperative learning, emphasizing the need for well-rounded teacher facilitation to address these issues effectively.

The data collected from both quantitative and qualitative sources illustrates a clear alignment with the research objectives and questions of this study.

To evaluate the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in enhancing the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners, the quantitative data reveals high positive feedback on teacher facilitation and cooperative learning strategies, with mean scores of 4.01 and 4.17, respectively. This indicates that students perceive these strategies as significantly improving their speaking skills. This finding directly addresses the research question of the extent to which cooperative learning strategies enhance speaking proficiency. Qualitative data reinforces this by describing how various strategies, such as differentiated instruction and individualized feedback, contribute to improved speaking skills, thereby validating the effectiveness of cooperative learning methods.

Regarding the challenges faced by 8th-grade ESL learners, the quantitative data shows a minimal percentage of students who disagreed about the effectiveness of teacher support, suggesting that while cooperative learning is generally beneficial, some students may

encounter challenges. This aligns with the research question on the specific challenges learners face. Qualitative data from teachers identifies practical issues, such as managing group dynamics and ensuring balanced participation, which highlights the areas where learners might struggle, thus providing insight into the contextual challenges that may impact the success of cooperative learning.

In examining the role of teachers, the quantitative data highlights the significant role teachers play in facilitating cooperative learning, with high mean scores related to the usefulness of teacher feedback and strategies. This aligns with the research question on the role of teachers in planning and conducting cooperative learning activities. The qualitative data provides a detailed account of teachers' facilitation methods, such as structured roles and individualized feedback, illustrating their critical role in supporting cooperative learning and enhancing speaking skills. This comprehensive view confirms the importance of teacher involvement in achieving effective cooperative learning outcomes.

Overall, the alignment between quantitative and qualitative data with both the research objectives and questions underscores the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in improving speaking skills, identifies specific challenges faced by learners, and highlights the crucial role of teachers in facilitating these strategies. This integrated approach confirms the study's findings and supports the effectiveness of cooperative learning in the educational context.

5.3 Challenges and Implementation Strategies in Cooperative Learning

The implementation of cooperative learning strategies, while promising, presents several challenges that need to be addressed to optimize their effectiveness. One prominent challenge highlighted in this study is the issue of varied proficiency levels among students, which can create disparities in group dynamics. Teachers reported difficulties in managing

groups with diverse skill levels, a concern that aligns with findings from Ozdemir and Yildirim (2020), who emphasize the need for tailored group compositions and interventions to address varying proficiency levels. This challenge is compounded by the necessity of ensuring equitable participation and managing group interactions, which can be particularly complex in heterogeneous groups.

Another significant challenge is the inconsistency in peer interactions, which can affect the overall effectiveness of cooperative learning. This aligns with the observations of Alrayah (2018), who found that uneven peer interactions can undermine the collaborative process and impede individual language development. To address this issue, the implementation of structured group roles and regular monitoring of group dynamics is crucial. Teachers in this study noted that without clear roles and responsibilities, some students may dominate group activities while others remain passive. This concern echoes the insights of Cohen (1994) and Webb (2009), who stress the importance of clear role definition and systematic assessment of individual contributions to ensure equitable participation and maximize the benefits of cooperative learning.

The complexity of assessing individual contributions within cooperative learning groups presents another challenge. Teachers noted difficulties in evaluating each student's performance fairly, which is consistent with Cohen's (1994) findings on the challenges of individual assessment in collaborative settings. To mitigate this issue, the implementation of systematic and transparent assessment strategies, such as peer assessments and self-evaluations, can provide a more comprehensive view of each student's contributions. This approach is supported by Lucena and San Jose (2016), who advocate for structured feedback mechanisms to enhance the assessment process and improve group effectiveness.

Furthermore, the integration of feedback mechanisms and targeted support is essential for addressing the challenges identified. The study's findings suggest that providing individualized feedback and support, as recommended by Al-Tamimi and Attamimi (2014), can enhance the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies. By focusing on specific areas for improvement and offering constructive feedback, teachers can help students overcome barriers and develop their speaking skills more effectively. Implementing these strategies can also address the challenges of group dynamics and assessment, ultimately leading to a more robust and effective cooperative learning environment.

In summary, addressing the challenges of varied proficiency levels, inconsistent peer interactions, and the complexity of individual assessment requires a multifaceted approach. By adopting strategies such as clear role definitions, structured feedback, and systematic assessment methods, educators can enhance the implementation of cooperative learning and improve its impact on ESL learners' speaking skills. Future research should continue to explore these areas and develop effective solutions to further optimize cooperative learning practices.

5.4 Theoretical Implications

As a research, this study makes a significant contribution to the existing body of literature on cooperative learning by providing a nuanced understanding of its impact on the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners in Pakistan. This research extends previous theoretical frameworks, particularly those proposed by Johnson and Johnson (1999) and Slavin (1995), by contextualizing cooperative learning within the specific educational and cultural milieu of Pakistani students. The findings underscore that cooperative learning strategies not only foster linguistic proficiency but also enhance students’ confidence and engagement, aligning with the theoretical assertion that structured group interactions are crucial for effective language acquisition. By focusing on this particular demographic, the research fills a critical

gap in the literature, offering insights into how cooperative learning can be tailored to meet the needs of diverse educational contexts and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of its theoretical underpinnings.

The significance of this study lies in its ability to bridge theoretical perspectives with practical applications in a Pakistani setting. The research confirms and expands upon earlier theories by demonstrating that cooperative learning can be effectively employed to address specific challenges faced by ESL learners in Pakistan, such as low confidence and limited speaking opportunities. This contribution is pivotal in advancing theoretical models of cooperative learning by incorporating empirical evidence from a unique educational context. Furthermore, the study provides a theoretical basis for developing targeted instructional strategies and policy recommendations, thereby offering a valuable framework for educators and policymakers seeking to enhance ESL teaching practices and improve student outcomes.

Additionally, this research provides valuable insights into the intersection of cooperative learning and sociocultural theory. Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is particularly relevant, as the study highlights how cooperative learning environments can effectively scaffold ESL learners' speaking skills by providing supportive interactions among peers. The findings align with Vygotsky's assertion that collaborative interactions facilitate cognitive development and language acquisition. By examining how cooperative learning can address the specific needs of Pakistani students, this study extends the application of sociocultural theory to a context that is often underrepresented in the literature, thus enriching our understanding of how sociocultural factors influence cooperative learning outcomes.

Moreover, the research challenges traditional views of cooperative learning by addressing the practical challenges and implementation strategies specific to the Pakistani

educational context. The study's findings emphasize the need for tailored strategies to manage diverse proficiency levels and ensure equitable participation, which complements and extends the theoretical frameworks of cooperative learning. By incorporating empirical data from Pakistani 8th-grade ESL learners, the research provides a more nuanced view of how cooperative learning theories can be adapted to different educational settings, thus contributing to the broader discourse on effective teaching practices in diverse contexts. This theoretical advancement offers a foundation for future research exploring the adaptation of cooperative learning strategies in varied cultural and educational settings, further enriching the global dialogue on this pedagogical approach.

5.5 Implications for the Practice of Educators

The findings of this research highlight several actionable strategies that educators can implement to enhance the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners through cooperative learning. Firstly, teachers should actively integrate cooperative learning techniques such as Think-Pair-Share, Jigsaw, and Number Heads Together into their lesson plans. These strategies not only foster collaborative skills but also provide students with ample opportunities for speaking practice in a supportive environment. By structuring activities that require students to engage in meaningful dialogue and peer interaction, teachers can create a more dynamic and interactive classroom atmosphere that promotes language acquisition and builds confidence.

Secondly, educators should leverage existing resources such as digital tools and multimedia to augment traditional cooperative learning methods. For example, online platforms and language learning apps can facilitate peer collaboration beyond the classroom and provide additional practice opportunities. Incorporating technology into cooperative tasks can also cater to diverse learning styles and make language learning more engaging. Teachers can use these tools to design interactive activities that reinforce vocabulary, grammar, and

pronunciation, while also encouraging students to apply their language skills in authentic contexts.

To address the needs of 21st-century learners, educators should focus on developing students' critical thinking and communication skills within cooperative learning frameworks. This involves creating tasks that challenge students to analyse, evaluate, and present information collaboratively. Teachers can implement project-based learning and problem-solving activities that require students to use their speaking skills in real-world scenarios. Additionally, professional development opportunities for teachers should emphasize effective strategies for facilitating group work and managing diverse classroom dynamics. By continuously refining their instructional practices and incorporating innovative approaches, educators can better support ESL learners in achieving improved speaking proficiency and overall language development.

Additionally, the study suggests that educators should consider the unique cultural and linguistic backgrounds of their students when implementing cooperative learning strategies. Tailoring activities to reflect students' cultural contexts and linguistic needs can enhance engagement and effectiveness. For instance, incorporating culturally relevant topics and materials into cooperative tasks can help bridge the gap between students' prior knowledge and new learning, making the language learning process more relatable and meaningful. This approach not only aligns with the principles of culturally responsive teaching but also addresses the specific challenges faced by Pakistani ESL learners, as identified in the study.

Furthermore, the research underscores the importance of continuous professional development for teachers in the area of cooperative learning. Educators should seek out training and resources that focus on effective facilitation of group work, managing diverse proficiency levels, and providing constructive feedback. Ongoing professional development will equip

teachers with the skills needed to adapt cooperative learning strategies to their classroom contexts and address any emerging challenges. By staying informed about the latest research and best practices in cooperative learning, educators can enhance their instructional approaches and better support their students' language development.

Lastly, educators should establish a feedback loop with students to evaluate the effectiveness of cooperative learning activities and make necessary adjustments. Regularly soliciting student feedback on group work dynamics, engagement levels, and perceived improvements in speaking skills can provide valuable insights for refining instructional practices. This iterative process of evaluation and adaptation will help ensure that cooperative learning remains responsive to students' needs and continues to foster meaningful language development.

5.6 Implications for Curriculum Developers of Language Learning

The findings of this research underscore the need for curriculum developers to integrate cooperative learning strategies more explicitly into educational frameworks to enhance the speaking skills of ESL learners. Given the significant benefits observed in fostering language proficiency through collaborative tasks, curriculum developers should design curricula that embed cooperative learning methodologies to improve language learning. This includes incorporating structured group activities, peer review sessions, and collaborative projects that align with language development goals. By systematically embedding these practices into the curriculum, developers can ensure that cooperative learning becomes a core component of students' educational experiences, thereby supporting more comprehensive language acquisition (Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Slavin, 1995).

In the context of Pakistan, where there is a stark contrast between the educational practices in government and private schools, curriculum developers face the challenge of

bridging this divide. Government schools often rely on traditional, rote-learning strategies, which may not support the interactive and communicative approaches necessary for effective language acquisition. To address this issue, curriculum developers should advocate for reforms that introduce cooperative learning strategies into government school curricula. This could involve revising existing syllabi to include collaborative tasks and providing professional development for teachers to effectively implement these strategies. By aligning curriculum development with contemporary pedagogical theories, developers can help modernize teaching practices and enhance language learning outcomes across diverse educational settings (Pilataxi Minda, 2022; Kandasamy & Habil, 2018).

Furthermore, curriculum developers should consider the unique educational needs and contextual factors of Pakistani students when designing cooperative learning frameworks. This includes adapting cooperative learning strategies to local cultural and linguistic contexts to ensure their relevance and effectiveness. Developers should also engage with stakeholders, including educators and policymakers, to create curriculum guidelines that address the specific challenges faced by both government and private schools. By fostering a more inclusive and dynamic curriculum, developers can contribute to reducing educational disparities and promoting equitable access to high-quality language education (Ramesh, Jenitha, & Sushma, 2023; Vellayan, 2021).

Additionally, curriculum developers should explore the integration of formative assessment techniques within cooperative learning frameworks to better monitor and support student progress. Regular formative assessments can provide timely feedback to both students and teachers, helping to identify areas of improvement and adjust instructional strategies accordingly. This approach ensures that cooperative learning is not only implemented but also continuously refined based on student performance and needs. Moreover, incorporating

strategies for differentiated instruction within cooperative learning activities can help address varying levels of language proficiency among students, ensuring that all learners benefit from collaborative tasks and achieve their language development goals.

Lastly, curriculum developers should promote the inclusion of family and community engagement in the cooperative learning process. Establishing connections between classroom activities and students' home environments can enhance the relevance of language learning and support the development of speaking skills. Engaging families in educational activities, such as collaborative projects or language practice at home, can reinforce classroom learning and provide additional support for students. By fostering strong connections between school and home, curriculum developers can create a more supportive and cohesive learning environment that enhances the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies.

5.7 Implications for Policymakers in Pakistan

The findings of this research highlight a critical need for policymakers in Pakistan to reform educational policies to embrace 21st-century pedagogical practices, particularly cooperative learning. The research demonstrates that cooperative learning significantly enhances ESL students' speaking skills by fostering engagement, reducing anxiety, and promoting effective communication (Pilataxi Minda, 2022; Vellayan, 2021). Policymakers should, therefore, consider integrating cooperative learning strategies into national educational frameworks. This could involve revising curriculum guidelines to include structured group activities and collaborative projects that support language development. Additionally, policy reforms should focus on providing ongoing professional development for teachers to effectively implement these strategies. Such measures would ensure that cooperative learning becomes a fundamental aspect of educational practice, leading to improved student outcomes and a more dynamic learning environment.

Furthermore, policymakers must address the disparity between government and private school sectors by aligning educational policies with contemporary teaching methods. In government schools, where traditional strategies often prevail, it is crucial to implement policies that support the adoption of collaborative learning approaches. This includes investing in resources and training to facilitate the transition from rote learning to interactive, student-centered methods. By promoting an educational policy that champions cooperative learning and equitable access to modern pedagogical techniques, policymakers can bridge the educational divide, enhance overall teaching quality, and better prepare students for the demands of the 21st century (Ramesh, Jenitha, & Sushma, 2023; Kandasamy & Habil, 2018).

In addition to curriculum reforms, policymakers should consider establishing frameworks for evaluating the effectiveness of cooperative learning implementations across different educational contexts. This could involve setting up pilot programs in diverse school settings to assess the impact of cooperative learning on student outcomes and gather empirical data to inform further policy adjustments. Policymakers could also develop assessment tools to measure not only language proficiency but also the effectiveness of cooperative learning in improving critical thinking and collaboration skills. Such data-driven approaches would enable continuous refinement of educational policies and ensure that cooperative learning strategies are tailored to meet the evolving needs of students and educators.

Moreover, there is a need for policymakers to foster partnerships between educational institutions, community organizations, and the private sector to support the integration of cooperative learning. These partnerships could facilitate the sharing of resources, expertise, and best practices, creating a collaborative network that benefits all stakeholders involved. Policymakers should encourage initiatives that promote community engagement in the educational process, such as involving local businesses and organizations in school-based

projects or providing real-world contexts for cooperative learning activities. By leveraging external resources and community support, policymakers can enhance the implementation of cooperative learning strategies and contribute to a more holistic and effective educational environment.

5.8 Actionable Recommendations for Policymakers, Curriculum Developers, Educators, and Teacher Training Based on the Findings of this Research

5.8.1 Recommendations for policymakers

- **Integrate Cooperative Learning in National Curriculum:** Develop and implement policies that incorporate cooperative learning strategies into the national curriculum for ESL programs, ensuring that these approaches are recognized and supported at all educational levels.
- **Increase Funding for Teacher Training:** Allocate funds specifically for professional development programs focused on cooperative learning techniques, ensuring that teachers are well-equipped to apply these methods effectively.
- **Promote Evidence-Based Practices:** Encourage the use of research-based cooperative learning strategies by mandating regular reviews of educational practices and updating guidelines based on current evidence.
- **Enhance Access to Resources:** Provide schools with resources such as interactive tools and materials that support cooperative learning, ensuring that both government and private schools have the necessary equipment to facilitate effective group work.
- **Develop Culturally Relevant Cooperative Learning Models**: Policymakers should create cooperative learning frameworks tailored to the cultural and linguistic diversity of Pakistan. This includes developing materials and activities that reflect local contexts, allowing students to engage with familiar content while practicing English. This

ensures that cooperative learning is both relatable and effective for middle-grade ESL learners.

- **Implement Ongoing Teacher Support Programs**: Beyond initial training, establish long-term support systems for teachers, such as mentorship programs, regular workshops, and peer collaboration platforms. This will help sustain the implementation of cooperative learning techniques and allow teachers to share best practices and challenges in real-time.
- **Mandate Cooperative Learning Assessment in Schools**: Introduce policies that require schools to assess the impact of cooperative learning strategies on students' language skills, particularly speaking abilities. Regular evaluations and feedback loops would ensure that cooperative learning is effectively integrated and refined based on students' performance.
- **Bridge Educational Disparities**: Address the gap between government and private schools by introducing policies that specifically target the under-resourced public education sector. This could include setting up pilot programs for cooperative learning in government schools and evaluating their outcomes before scaling these initiatives nationwide.
- **Develop Teacher-Led Innovation Grants**: Introduce small grant programs for teachers who develop innovative cooperative learning activities or materials tailored to the specific needs of their students. This would encourage grassroots innovation in classroom practices, fostering ownership of pedagogical reforms.
- **Encourage Parent-Teacher Collaboration**: Promote policies that encourage active parental involvement in cooperative learning activities. Organizing workshops or orientations for parents could help bridge the gap between school activities and home support, providing a more holistic learning environment for middle-grade ESL learners.

5.8.2 Recommendations for curriculum developers

- **Embed Cooperative Learning Frameworks in the Curriculum**: Design middle-grade English curricula that integrate cooperative learning models such as Think-Pair-Share, Jigsaw, and Group Investigation as core instructional strategies. These methods should be aligned with learning objectives to support language acquisition and communication skills development.
- **Develop Speaking-Focused Modules**: Include specific modules or units focused on enhancing speaking skills through cooperative activities. These modules should encourage oral communication, pronunciation practice, and fluency exercises within collaborative settings to provide consistent opportunities for spoken English development.
- **Incorporate Culturally Relevant Content for ESL Learners**: Adapt the curriculum to include culturally and linguistically relevant topics that reflect the realities of Pakistani learners. This ensures that students relate to the content, reducing anxiety and encouraging active participation in group discussions.
- **Provide Teacher Guides and Resources for Cooperative Learning**: Create detailed teacher guides that offer step-by-step instructions on implementing cooperative learning activities in classrooms. These guides should include sample lesson plans, group activity ideas, and strategies for managing group dynamics effectively.
- **Encourage Formative Assessments Through Group Work**: Design assessments that evaluate students' language proficiency through group interactions. This could include peer assessments, collaborative presentations, or group discussions that measure fluency, vocabulary use, and linguistic complexity in a non-threatening, supportive environment.

- **Design Structured Group Work Rubrics**: Develop rubrics for assessing cooperative learning activities that focus on both language skills and collaboration. This ensures that students are evaluated holistically, considering their contribution to group discussions and their progress in speaking skills.
- **Promote Continuous Professional Development for Teachers**: Integrate training modules within the curriculum that allow teachers to continuously refine their ability to implement cooperative learning strategies. These programs should focus on scaffolding techniques, effective group management, and addressing the unique needs of ESL learners in Pakistan.
- **Create Adaptable Curriculum Models for Different School Types**: Given the disparity between private and government schools in Pakistan, design adaptable curriculum models that can be customized based on available resources. This will ensure that cooperative learning is accessible to all schools, regardless of infrastructure or teacher-to-student ratios.
- **Leverage Technology to Support Collaborative Learning**: Where possible, integrate digital resources into the curriculum that facilitate cooperative learning, such as language learning apps or online platforms for group collaboration. This can help extend language practice beyond the classroom, especially in urban areas where technology is more accessible.
- **Emphasize the Role of Peer Support in Language Development**: In curriculum frameworks, highlight the importance of peer-to-peer interaction and support in building speaking skills. Encouraging curriculum developers to include activities that allow students to work together, provide feedback, and learn from each other can enhance the overall effectiveness of language instruction.

5.8.3 Recommendation for educators

- **Adopt Diverse Cooperative Learning Techniques:** Implement a variety of cooperative learning strategies, such as Think-Pair-Share, Jigsaw, and Numbered Heads Together, to address different learning styles and enhance student engagement.
- **Foster a Collaborative Classroom Environment:** Create an inclusive and supportive classroom environment that encourages student interaction and collaboration, promoting a positive atmosphere for cooperative learning.
- **Develop Clear Group Roles and Responsibilities:** Clearly define and assign roles within student groups to ensure that each member contributes effectively and that all students are actively involved in the learning process.
- **Monitor and Support Group Dynamics:** Regularly observe and support group interactions to address any issues related to group dynamics, such as uneven participation or conflicts, and provide guidance to enhance collaboration.
- **Incorporate Language-Specific Cooperative Activities**: Design cooperative learning tasks that specifically target speaking skills, such as role-playing, storytelling, or debate activities. These should focus on fluency, vocabulary building, and pronunciation improvement to align with the students' language development needs.
- **Utilize Culturally Relevant Content**: To make learning more relatable, use culturally appropriate topics and themes in cooperative tasks. This approach not only fosters engagement but also helps students practice English within familiar contexts, boosting their confidence in using the language.
- **Provide Scaffolding and Language Support**: Offer scaffolding techniques such as sentence starters, vocabulary lists, or guided prompts during cooperative learning activities. This helps middle-grade ESL learners overcome language barriers and participate more actively in group discussions.

- **Encourage Peer Feedback and Reflection**: Build opportunities for peer assessment and self-reflection into cooperative tasks. Allow students to provide constructive feedback to their group members, which can improve their speaking skills and help them learn from each other.
- **Gradually Increase Task Complexity**: Start with simple cooperative tasks and gradually increase their complexity as students become more confident in their speaking abilities. This helps reduce anxiety and ensures that all learners can participate without feeling overwhelmed.
- **Integrate Technology into Cooperative Learning**: Use digital tools like collaborative apps or online discussion platforms to extend cooperative learning beyond the classroom. In areas where technology is accessible, this can provide students with additional opportunities to practice their English-speaking skills.
- **Focus on Mixed-Ability Grouping**: Deliberately form mixed-ability groups so that stronger students can support weaker peers in language development. This creates an inclusive environment where all students benefit from peer learning.

5.8.4 Recommendations for teacher training

- **Provide Specialised Training on Cooperative Learning:** Offer targeted professional development sessions that focus on the principles and implementation of cooperative learning strategies, equipping teachers with practical skills and techniques.
- **Facilitate Peer Learning Opportunities:** Encourage teachers to observe and collaborate with peers who have successfully implemented cooperative learning in their classrooms, fostering a culture of shared learning and continuous improvement.
- **Train Teachers to Differentiate Instruction in Group Settings**: Provide professional development on differentiating tasks within cooperative learning to meet the needs of diverse learners. In the Pakistani context, where English proficiency levels vary widely

among students, training should focus on adapting tasks so that all students can actively participate and benefit from group activities.

- **Enhance Classroom Management Skills for Group Work**: Offer training that focuses on classroom management during cooperative learning sessions. Teachers need to be equipped with strategies for maintaining order, ensuring equitable participation, and resolving conflicts within groups to create a productive learning environment.
- **Incorporate Technology in Teacher Training for Cooperative Learning**: Introduce teachers to digital tools that support cooperative learning, such as apps and platforms that promote collaboration and communication. This training should demonstrate how to integrate technology effectively into cooperative learning to extend English-speaking practice beyond the classroom.
- **Focus on Student-Centered Facilitation Techniques**: Provide training on how to shift from traditional teacher-centered methods to student-centered approaches. Teachers should be trained to take on the role of facilitators, guiding students through group work and allowing them to take ownership of their learning, particularly in speaking exercises.
- **Develop Assessment Skills for Cooperative Learning**: Offer sessions on how to assess both individual and group performance within cooperative learning frameworks. Teachers should learn to evaluate students' speaking progress, peer collaboration, and overall contribution to group tasks through formative and summative assessments.
- **Create Reflective Practice Modules in Training**: Incorporate reflective practice into teacher training, encouraging educators to regularly assess and refine their cooperative learning practices. Teachers should be provided with frameworks to reflect on what works, and what doesn't, and how to improve the effectiveness of group work in fostering speaking skills.

- **Train Teachers to Support Language Anxiety Reduction**: Focus on equipping teachers with techniques to reduce language anxiety in cooperative learning environments. Since many Pakistani middle-grade students are hesitant to speak English due to fear of mistakes, training should cover methods to create a supportive and low-pressure environment where students feel comfortable engaging in conversation.
- **Contextualise Training for Large Class Sizes**: Given the larger class sizes often present in Pakistan, provide training that helps teachers adapt cooperative learning strategies for more crowded classrooms. Teachers should learn techniques for organizing groups effectively and ensuring meaningful participation, even in environments with limited resources or high student numbers.

5.9 Recommendations for Future Researchers in the Area of Cooperative Learning and ESL

1. **Investigate Long-Term Impact**: Future research should explore the long-term effects of cooperative learning strategies on ESL learners' speaking skills, focusing on language retention, continuous improvement, and the ability to transfer speaking skills to real-world scenarios.
2. **Expand to Broader Educational Contexts**: Conduct studies in diverse educational settings across Pakistan, such as rural, peri-urban, and government schools. This would help determine how cooperative learning strategies perform in varying socioeconomic and linguistic contexts, offering a more comprehensive view of their effectiveness.
3. **Study Longitudinal Effects**: Given the short-term nature of this study, future researchers should conduct longitudinal studies to examine how cooperative learning impacts speaking skills over extended periods. This could provide insights into the sustainability of language development and its progressive effects.

4. **Focus on Teacher Facilitation Skills**: Investigate how different facilitation strategies used by teachers impact the success of cooperative learning in ESL settings. Research should assess the specific ways teacher guidance, scaffolding, and feedback contribute to the development of speaking skills in cooperative groups.
5. **Explore Student Motivation and Autonomy**: Examine the role of intrinsic motivation and student autonomy in cooperative learning environments, particularly how these factors influence student engagement and their willingness to participate in group-based speaking activities.
6. **Investigate Peer Support Mechanisms**: Research how peer support mechanisms within cooperative learning impact ESL learners' confidence and speaking proficiency. Studies could focus on how collaborative dynamics and peer encouragement influence students' ability to take risks in language use.
7. **Compare Cooperative Learning Models**: Conduct comparative studies of different cooperative learning models, such as Jigsaw and Think-Pair-Share, to evaluate their effectiveness in enhancing various aspects of speaking skills (e.g., fluency, pronunciation, and accuracy).
8. **Examine Challenges in Resource-Limited Settings**: Given the resource constraints of some schools, future researchers should investigate how cooperative learning strategies can be adapted for classrooms with limited materials, large student populations, and few technological resources.
9. **Research Cultural and Linguistic Sensitivity**: Examine how cultural and linguistic diversity within Pakistan influences the implementation and success of cooperative learning strategies in ESL classrooms. This could help develop approaches that are sensitive to regional and cultural differences.

10. **Evaluate Technology Integration in Cooperative Learning**: Given the growing role of digital tools in education, future research should assess how technology can be integrated into cooperative learning frameworks to enhance English speaking skills, particularly in hybrid or remote learning environments.
11. **Investigate Gender-Specific Effects**: Since gender dynamics can affect participation and group collaboration, future studies could investigate how cooperative learning strategies influence boys and girls differently in Pakistani middle-grade ESL classrooms, identifying potential areas for tailored interventions.
12. **Examine Professional Development for Teachers**: Future researchers should evaluate the effectiveness of various teacher training models in equipping educators with the skills needed to successfully implement cooperative learning, particularly in developing student speaking skills.

5.10 Research Summary

This research provides a comprehensive exploration of the role of cooperative learning in enhancing the English-speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners in Pakistan, aligning closely with its stated aims and objectives. The study aimed to investigate how cooperative learning strategies impact speaking proficiency, identify challenges faced by students, and assess the role of teachers in facilitating these strategies. Through a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both a student questionnaire and semi-structured teacher interviews, the research offers valuable insights into these areas. The findings indicate that cooperative learning significantly improves speaking skills by fostering engagement, reducing anxiety, and promoting interactive practice (Vellayan, 2021; Pilataxi Minda, 2022). Students reported increased confidence and better vocabulary usage, while teachers highlighted the positive effects of collaborative activities on language development and peer support.

The research also identifies several challenges, including limited exposure to English outside the classroom, fear of making mistakes, and difficulties in maintaining consistent participation. These challenges are consistent with existing literature on ESL learners' struggles (Kandasamy & Habil, 2018; Ramesh, Jenitha, & Sushma, 2023). The study underscores the need for effective implementation strategies and teacher training to overcome these barriers, emphasizing that while cooperative learning holds promise, its success depends on addressing these challenges (Ozdemir & Yildirim, 2020). By aligning the findings with the research objectives, it becomes evident that cooperative learning can enhance speaking skills, but requires careful facilitation and support to maximize its benefits.

In evaluating the role of teachers, the research highlights their critical role in planning and executing cooperative learning activities that significantly impact students' speaking abilities. Teachers' facilitation strategies, as revealed through interviews, are crucial for creating a supportive environment that fosters effective communication and collaboration (Lucena & San Jose, 2016; Namaziandost et al., 2019). The study contributes to the broader educational discourse by providing targeted recommendations for improving cooperative learning practices, thereby addressing the research questions and offering actionable insights for educators and curriculum developers. Overall, the research not only adds to the existing body of knowledge but also provides practical implications for enhancing ESL instruction in Pakistan.

Furthermore, the research highlights the importance of integrating cooperative learning into curriculum development, particularly in the context of Pakistan where there is often a disparity in teaching approaches between private and public educational institutions. The findings suggest that cooperative learning can bridge this gap by offering a more inclusive and participatory model for language acquisition. This aspect is crucial for government schools,

where traditional rote learning methods dominate. By shifting towards interactive, student-centered methodologies, cooperative learning can provide a more engaging and effective framework for teaching English, enhancing students' communicative competence and overall language proficiency.

Finally, the research emphasises the need for policymakers to consider the broader application of cooperative learning within national educational frameworks. The success of these strategies in fostering improved speaking skills in ESL learners indicates that cooperative learning could serve as a valuable pedagogical tool in meeting the demands of 21st-century education. By addressing systemic challenges such as teacher training, curriculum reform, and resource allocation, policymakers can help scale the benefits of cooperative learning, ensuring more equitable access to quality language education across Pakistan. The study, therefore, provides a foundation for future educational reforms aimed at enhancing language acquisition through collaborative and interactive learning environments.

5.11 Current Trends and Future Directions of Cooperative Learning and Speaking Skills

5.11.1 Current trends in cooperative learning and speaking skills

In recent years, cooperative learning has gained prominence as an effective pedagogical approach for enhancing speaking skills among English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. This trend aligns with the 21st-century emphasis on collaborative competencies, critical thinking, and digital literacy. Cooperative learning, which involves structured group activities and peer interactions, has been shown to foster significant improvements in language proficiency by providing learners with ample opportunities for practical language use and feedback (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Current trends reflect a growing recognition of the value of interactive and student-centered learning environments, particularly in the context of ESL education.

5.11.2 The integration of technology and digital tools

The integration of technology into cooperative learning strategies has become a pivotal trend, reflecting the increasing role of digital tools in education. Digital platforms, such as collaborative online spaces and language learning apps, facilitate real-time communication and collaboration among students, enhancing their speaking skills interactively and engagingly (Kreijns, Kirschner, & Jochems, 2003). The use of technology not only supports collaborative learning but also allows for personalized and adaptive learning experiences. Virtual learning environments and tools like Google Classroom, Zoom, and language learning software enable students to practice their speaking skills beyond the traditional classroom setting, promoting greater language exposure and practice (Wang & Vásquez, 2012).

5.11.3 21st-Century competencies and cooperative learning

The alignment of cooperative learning with 21st-century competencies is increasingly emphasized in contemporary educational frameworks. Skills such as collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking are integral to effective learning and are fostered through cooperative learning methods (Saavedra & Opfer, 2012). By engaging in group discussions, collaborative projects, and peer feedback, students develop not only their language skills but also essential life skills necessary for success in the globalized and digital world. Cooperative learning supports these competencies by encouraging students to work together, solve problems collectively, and communicate effectively, thereby enhancing their overall academic and social development (Hattie, 2009).

In the context of this research, cooperative learning has proven to be particularly effective in developing communication skills, one of the key 21st-century competencies, among 8th-grade ESL learners. Through structured group activities and interactive speaking tasks, students are given ample opportunities to practice and refine their language skills in real-time

settings. This aligns with Trilling and Fadel's (2009) emphasis on the need for educational strategies that foster clear and coherent communication, especially in language learning environments. The collaborative nature of cooperative learning also ensures that students are consistently exposed to authentic communication scenarios, where they negotiate meaning, share ideas, and receive immediate feedback from their peers, further enhancing their language proficiency and confidence in using English.

Additionally, cooperative learning promotes critical thinking and problem solving two other essential 21st-century skills—by encouraging students to engage in higher-order thinking as they work together to complete complex tasks. For instance, when solving a language-based problem or creating a group presentation, students must collectively analyse information, assess different perspectives, and make decisions, all of which are critical thinking processes (Saavedra & Opfer, 2012). This research, supported by the findings of Pilataxi Minda (2022), demonstrates how cooperative learning fosters a learning environment where students not only improve their speaking abilities but also enhance their ability to think critically and approach challenges creatively. The emphasis on peer interaction and group dynamics further develops students' ability to collaborate effectively, preparing them for the increasingly interconnected and collaborative nature of the 21st-century workforce.

5.11.4 Future directions and emerging trends

Looking ahead, several emerging trends and directions are shaping the future of cooperative learning and speaking skills. First, there is an increasing focus on integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) and adaptive learning technologies into cooperative learning environments. AI-driven tools can provide personalized feedback and support, identify learning gaps, and offer targeted interventions to enhance students' speaking skills (Heffernan & Heffernan, 2014). Additionally, the use of AI for language practice and assessment is

expected to revolutionize language learning by offering more tailored and responsive educational experiences (Shute & Ventura, 2013).

Second, future research should explore the impact of hybrid and blended learning models that combine traditional face-to-face cooperative learning with online and digital components. This approach can leverage the strengths of both modalities, providing students with flexible and dynamic learning experiences (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). As the educational landscape continues to evolve, it is crucial to examine how these models affect students' speaking skills and their overall engagement in learning activities.

Finally, there is a need for further research on the cultural and contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in diverse educational settings. Understanding how different cultural backgrounds and educational contexts impact the implementation and outcomes of cooperative learning can help develop more inclusive and effective pedagogical practices (Gonçalves, 2015).

In summary, the current trends in cooperative learning highlight its role in enhancing speaking skills through interactive, student-centered approaches and the integration of technology. Future directions point towards the incorporation of AI and blended learning models, as well as a deeper exploration of contextual factors. Aligning these developments with 21st-century competencies and the evolving digital landscape will ensure that cooperative learning remains a relevant and effective strategy for improving ESL learners' speaking skills.

5.12 Conclusion

This thesis has illuminated the significant role of cooperative learning in enhancing the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners through a focused case study of a private sector school in Lahore, Pakistan. The research confirmed that when effectively implemented,

cooperative learning strategies can transform the learning experience by fostering meaningful interactions, improving oral proficiency, and boosting student confidence. By engaging students in structured group activities such as role-plays, discussions, and collaborative projects, learners benefit greatly from the interactive nature of cooperative learning, which aligns well with contemporary educational demands for engagement and practical language use.

In addressing the first research question—*To what extent do cooperative learning strategies improve the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners?*—the findings underscore the positive impact of cooperative learning on various aspects of speaking skills, including pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, and linguistic complexity. This confirms that cooperative learning not only enhances oral proficiency but also fosters critical skills such as collaboration, problem-solving, and peer interaction, all essential for holistic language development.

However, the study also identified key challenges faced by learners, directly addressing the second research question—*What challenges do 8th-grade ESL learners encounter in improving their speaking skills within a cooperative learning environment?* The research revealed that while students thrive in group settings, difficulties arise in ensuring equitable participation, with some students dominating discussions and others remaining passive. Additionally, assessing individual contributions within group tasks remains a persistent challenge. Students also face struggles with group roles, unequal participation, and lack of confidence in their language abilities, which sometimes limits the full potential of cooperative learning.

The role of teachers emerged as a crucial factor in the success of cooperative learning strategies, as highlighted in the third research question—*What is the role of teachers in planning and conducting cooperative learning activities that influence the speaking skills of*

8th-grade ESL learners? Effective teacher facilitation and strategic planning are essential to maximise the benefits of cooperative learning. The study indicated that teachers must be equipped with not only training but also ongoing support to adapt cooperative learning to the needs of diverse classrooms. Teachers' ability to monitor group dynamics, allocate roles, and provide targeted feedback can significantly influence the success of these collaborative strategies.

For educators, the findings suggest that targeted professional development and continuous refinement of cooperative learning practices are key to creating dynamic and supportive learning environments. Teachers need practical strategies for overcoming challenges such as uneven participation and group dynamics, ensuring that all students can engage meaningfully in cooperative tasks.

Curriculum developers are encouraged to integrate cooperative learning principles into educational frameworks. By developing curricula that include structured opportunities for collaboration, role-based tasks, and peer interaction, developers can help bridge the gap between traditional and modern teaching methods. This is especially relevant in Pakistan's educational context, where disparities between government and private schools often result in unequal access to quality education. Cooperative learning, if embedded into curricula, can offer a pathway for developing not just language skills, but also critical 21st-century competencies such as creativity, communication, and problem-solving.

Policymakers must align educational policies with the competencies required for the 21st century, emphasising collaboration, communication, and the integration of technology in classrooms. By supporting cooperative learning as a central pedagogical approach and providing necessary resources for its implementation, policymakers can contribute to educational reforms that foster student preparedness for the demands of a globalised and digital

world. The inclusion of cooperative learning in educational policies can serve as a catalyst for improving not only language acquisition but also the social and cognitive skills needed for future success.

The research also highlighted that while cooperative learning offers immense potential, it is not without its challenges. Issues such as limited resources, large class sizes, and resistance to pedagogical change remain significant barriers, particularly in resource-constrained environments like many schools in Pakistan. Teacher training, both initial and ongoing, is crucial to address these challenges. Moreover, leveraging technology can further enhance cooperative learning practices. The integration of digital tools and AI-based platforms could allow teachers to monitor group work, assess individual contributions, and offer real-time feedback, thus improving the overall effectiveness of collaborative tasks. These technological interventions could be particularly useful in addressing the challenges of large classrooms and uneven student participation.

While this study has provided valuable insights into the short-term effects of cooperative learning, future research should focus on exploring its long-term impact on speaking skills and broader educational outcomes. Longitudinal studies that track the retention of language skills and the continued development of collaboration and communication abilities are necessary to fully understand the potential of cooperative learning. Additionally, expanding this research to multiple schools and diverse educational contexts, including rural and under-resourced schools, would offer a more comprehensive view of how cooperative learning can be adapted to varying conditions. Investigating the role of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and adaptive learning tools, in enhancing cooperative learning practices could also provide valuable insights for future educational strategies.

To conclude, this case study has demonstrated the transformative potential of cooperative learning for improving speaking skills among 8th-grade ESL learners. The research has provided important insights into the benefits, challenges, and practical implications of cooperative learning, offering a roadmap for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers to enhance educational practices. By embracing cooperative learning and addressing the challenges identified in this study, stakeholders can create more interactive, inclusive, and effective learning environments that meet the needs of 21st-century students in Pakistan and beyond.

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APPENDIX

Appendix Note

This appendix includes essential documentation related to the research conducted on the role of cooperative learning in improving the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners. The following materials are provided: the permission letter from the CEO of the Unique School System to conduct the research, consent forms from all six participating teachers, transcripts of interviews with the six teachers (which are presented as verbatim quotes), and the results from the Google Forms questionnaire completed by 250 students. Additionally, five samples of parental consent forms and five samples of student consent forms are included to demonstrate compliance with ethical research standards. All documents ensure the integrity and confidentiality of participants while providing evidence of informed consent.

Section Title	Description	Page Number
CEO Permission Letter	Permission letter to conduct research in three branches of the Unique School System	253
Teacher Consent Forms	Consent forms from six participating teachers teaching English to grade 8	258
Parental Consent Samples	Samples of parental consent forms (5 samples)	273
Student Consent Samples	Samples of student consent forms (5 samples)	289
Student Questionnaire	The 35-statement questionnaire used for Google forms	301
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Semi-Structured Interview Questions	The 17 questions formulated for the semi-structured interview	318
Transcripts of Teacher Interviews	Transcript of interviews with six teachers	321

APPENDIX A: CEO PERMISSION LETTER

To,

The CEO

Ibrar Khan Niazi

Unique International Educational Services (U.I.E.S)

Pakistan

Subject: Request for Permission to Conduct Research on Cooperative Learning in 8th-Grade ESL Classes

Respected Sir,

I am writing to seek your permission to conduct research at three branches of your school. My name is Javeria Rana, and I am an M.S. TESOL student at Lahore College for Women University. Securing permission to study the role of cooperative learning in enhancing the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners is pivotal for my academic journey and has practical implications for education.

This study is significant for English teachers, schools, and students. It offers educators an opportunity to explore innovative pedagogical methods tailored for ESL learners. Insights gained can help refine instructional practices, fostering a more inclusive and engaging classroom environment that promotes language acquisition. Furthermore, the findings may inform professional development initiatives, equipping educators with evidence-based strategies to address the diverse needs of ESL students effectively.

For the school administration, granting permission for this research signifies a commitment to fostering academic inquiry and continuous improvement. By participating, the

school contributes to the advancement of knowledge in TESOL and demonstrates a proactive approach to enhancing educational quality. The outcomes of this research can also guide curriculum development efforts, integrating cooperative learning methodologies into existing programs to optimize learning outcomes for ESL learners.

Most importantly, the research holds immense significance for the students. Their active participation allows them to share experiences of improvement in speaking skills through collaborative learning, contributing to educational research within their school community. By investigating the impact of cooperative learning on speaking proficiency, this study promises valuable insights with far-reaching implications for English language education. The researcher information, timeline, and methodology are detailed in the application below.

Research at Unique School System Branches - Grade 8

Applicant Information

• Name: Javeria Rana (M.S. TESOL)

• Affiliation: Lahore College for Women University

• Contact Information: eshawrana123@gmail.com / Phone Number: 03498719013

Research Project Information

• **Research Title: The Role of Cooperative Learning in Improving the Speaking Skills of 8th Grade ESL Learners: A Case Study of a Private Sector School in Lahore.**

• **Research Questions:**

1. To what extent do cooperative learning strategies improve the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners?

2. What challenges do 8th-grade ESL learners encounter in improving their speaking skills within a cooperative learning environment?
3. What is the role of teachers in planning and conducting the cooperative learning activities that influence the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners?

• **Research Methods:**

- Data collection will include a semi-structured interview with six English teachers and a student questionnaire filled out by 250 grade 8 students via Google Forms.
- The Google Forms will be circulated via WhatsApp, and the researcher will conduct 2-3 sessions with students to explain the study and address any questions.
- One-on-one sessions will be held with each of the six teachers for interviews.
- The study sample will include only 8th-grade English language learners and their teachers.

• **Timeline:**

- The proposed duration is 2 weeks.

Safety and Confidentiality

- I will maintain confidentiality, obtain student and parental consent, and adhere to the school's data privacy protocols.

I understand that this application requires approval from the school principal and the teachers involved in the research.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to collaborating with you and the staff at Unique School System as we embark on this research journey together.

Warm regards,

Javeria Rana



Date: 18-03-2024

Form: Consent for Research Project

Contact Information

M.S. Student Info:

Name: Javeria Rana Student ID #: 2225236009

University: Lahore College for Women University

Subject: TESOL Session 2022-2024

Preferred Phone #: Country Code: +92 Number: 0349-8719013

Email: eshawrana123@gmail.com

Site Info: The Unique School System

Site Address: 14 E 2 Main Blvd, Block P Phase 2 WAPDA Town, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. 56400

Agreement *(to be completed by the CEO/principal)*

I Ibrar Khan Niazi, principal/ CEO of the Unique School System (s) understand:

- The nature of the planned classroom research project;

- This is a course requirement for the above-named M.S. student;
- That the privacy and confidentiality of every staff member and student in all three buildings will be protected;
- That there will be no requests for data, access to records, or other demands on personnel time other than what has been described in the application that was provided to me;
- That I have the right to stop the project if it goes in a direction to which I have not agreed;
- The data will be included in the final written report that is submitted to the M.S. Student's LCWU Course Instructor;
- That the final written report will be the only formal written document prepared about the project and that it is part of a dissertation requirement; and
- That I will be given a copy of the final written report

I hereby give my permission to the above-named M.S. student to conduct the proposed research in my school(s).

Ibrar Khan Niazi

Signature of Principal/CEO

Date: 22-03-2024

APPENDIX: B TEACHER CONSENT FORMS

Teacher Consent Form for Participation in Research Study-Teacher A

Title of Study:

The Role of Cooperative Learning in Improving the Speaking Skills of 8th-Grade ESL Learners: A Case Study of a Private Sector School in Lahore

Researcher:

Javeria Rana

M.S. TESOL Student

Lahore College for Women University

Email: eshawrana123@gmail.com

Phone: +92 349-8719013

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of cooperative learning strategies on the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners. This research aims to understand how these strategies affect students' engagement, confidence, and overall speaking proficiency.

Research Objectives:

1. To evaluate the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in enhancing the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners.
2. To identify the specific challenges that 8th-grade ESL learners face in developing their speaking skills in a cooperative learning environment.
3. To examine the role of teachers in facilitating cooperative learning activities that influence the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners.

Research Questions:

1. To what extent do cooperative learning strategies improve the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners?
2. What challenges do 8th-grade ESL learners encounter in improving their speaking skills within a cooperative learning environment?
3. What is the role of teachers in planning and conducting the cooperative learning activities that influence the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners?

Participation Details:

As a participant, you will be involved in a one-on-one semi-structured interview. The interview will focus on your experiences, perceptions, and insights related to cooperative learning and its impact on students' speaking skills and your supporting role as a facilitator. The interview will be conducted at a mutually convenient time and is expected to last approximately 45-60 minutes.

Confidentiality:

Your responses will be kept confidential. Data will be anonymised, and no identifiable information will be included in any published reports. Only the researcher will have access to the raw data.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

Contact Information for Questions:

If you have any questions about the study or your participation, please feel free to contact me at the email or phone number provided above.

Consent Statement:

By signing below, you indicate that you have read and understood the information above and that you agree to participate in this research study.

Participant Name: SR

Signature:



Date: 22-08-2024

Teacher Consent Form for Participation in Research Study-Teacher B

Title of Study:

The Role of Cooperative Learning in Improving the Speaking Skills of 8th-Grade ESL Learners: A Case Study of a Private Sector School in Lahore

Researcher:

Javeria Rana

M.S. TESOL Student

Lahore College for Women University

Email: eshawrana123@gmail.com

Phone: +92 349-8719013

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of cooperative learning strategies on the

speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners. This research aims to understand how these strategies affect students' engagement, confidence, and overall speaking proficiency.

Research Objectives:

4. To evaluate the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in enhancing the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners.
5. To identify the specific challenges that 8th-grade ESL learners face in developing their speaking skills in a cooperative learning environment.
6. To examine the role of teachers in facilitating cooperative learning activities that influence the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners.

Research Questions:

4. To what extent do cooperative learning strategies improve the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners?
5. What challenges do 8th-grade ESL learners encounter in improving their speaking skills within a cooperative learning environment?
6. What is the role of teachers in planning and conducting the cooperative learning activities that influence the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners?

Participation Details:

As a participant, you will be involved in a one-on-one semi-structured interview. The interview will focus on your experiences, perceptions, and insights related to cooperative learning and its impact on students' speaking skills and your supporting role as a facilitator. The interview will be conducted at a mutually convenient time and is expected to last approximately 45-60 minutes.

Confidentiality:

Your responses will be kept confidential. Data will be anonymised, and no identifiable information will be included in any published reports. Only the researcher will have access to the raw data.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

Contact Information for Questions:

If you have any questions about the study or your participation, please feel free to contact me at the email or phone number provided above.

Consent Statement:

By signing below, you indicate that you have read and understood the information above and that you agree to participate in this research study.

Participant Name: HF

Signature:



Date: 26-08-2024

Teacher Consent Form for Participation in Research Study-Teacher C

Title of Study:

The Role of Cooperative Learning in Improving the Speaking Skills of 8th-Grade ESL Learners: A Case Study of a Private Sector School in Lahore

Researcher:

Javeria Rana

M.S. TESOL Student

Lahore College for Women University

Email: eshawrana123@gmail.com

Phone: +92 349-8719013

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of cooperative learning strategies on the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners. This research aims to understand how these strategies affect students' engagement, confidence, and overall speaking proficiency.

Research Objectives:

7. To evaluate the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in enhancing the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners.
8. To identify the specific challenges that 8th-grade ESL learners face in developing their speaking skills in a cooperative learning environment.
9. To examine the role of teachers in facilitating cooperative learning activities that influence the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners.

Research Questions:

7. To what extent do cooperative learning strategies improve the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners?
8. What challenges do 8th-grade ESL learners encounter in improving their speaking skills within a cooperative learning environment?
9. What is the role of teachers in planning and conducting the cooperative learning activities that influence the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners?

Participation Details:

As a participant, you will be involved in a one-on-one semi-structured interview. The interview will focus on your experiences, perceptions, and insights related to cooperative learning and its impact on students' speaking skills and your supporting role as a facilitator. The interview will be conducted at a mutually convenient time and is expected to last approximately 45-60 minutes.

Confidentiality:

Your responses will be kept confidential. Data will be anonymised, and no identifiable information will be included in any published reports. Only the researcher will have access to the raw data.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

Contact Information for Questions:

If you have any questions about the study or your participation, please feel free to contact me at the email or phone number provided above.

Consent Statement:

By signing below, you indicate that you have read and understood the information above and that you agree to participate in this research study.

Participant Name: NK

Signature:

NKhan

Date: 27-08-2024

Teacher Consent Form for Participation in Research Study-Teacher D

Title of Study:

The Role of Cooperative Learning in Improving the Speaking Skills of 8th-Grade ESL Learners: A Case Study of a Private Sector School in Lahore

Researcher:

Javeria Rana

M.S. TESOL Student

Lahore College for Women University

Email: eshawrana123@gmail.com

Phone: +92 349-8719013

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of cooperative learning strategies on the

speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners. This research aims to understand how these strategies affect students' engagement, confidence, and overall speaking proficiency.

Research Objectives:

10. To evaluate the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in enhancing the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners.
11. To identify the specific challenges that 8th-grade ESL learners face in developing their speaking skills in a cooperative learning environment.
12. To examine the role of teachers in facilitating cooperative learning activities that influence the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners.

Research Questions:

10. To what extent do cooperative learning strategies improve the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners?
11. What challenges do 8th-grade ESL learners encounter in improving their speaking skills within a cooperative learning environment?
12. What is the role of teachers in planning and conducting the cooperative learning activities that influence the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners?

Participation Details:

As a participant, you will be involved in a one-on-one semi-structured interview. The interview will focus on your experiences, perceptions, and insights related to cooperative learning and its impact on students' speaking skills and your supporting role as a facilitator. The interview will be conducted at a mutually convenient time and is expected to last approximately 45-60 minutes.

Confidentiality:

Your responses will be kept confidential. Data will be anonymised, and no identifiable information will be included in any published reports. Only the researcher will have access to the raw data.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

Contact Information for Questions:

If you have any questions about the study or your participation, please feel free to contact me at the email or phone number provided above.

Consent Statement:

By signing below, you indicate that you have read and understood the information above and that you agree to participate in this research study.

Participant Name: AR

Signature:



Date: 27-08-2024

Teacher Consent Form for Participation in Research Study-Teacher E

Title of Study:

The Role of Cooperative Learning in Improving the Speaking Skills of 8th-Grade ESL Learners: A Case Study of a Private Sector School in Lahore

Researcher:

Javeria Rana

M.S. TESOL Student

Lahore College for Women University

Email: eshawrana123@gmail.com

Phone: +92 349-8719013

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of cooperative learning strategies on the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners. This research aims to understand how these strategies affect students' engagement, confidence, and overall speaking proficiency.

Research Objectives:

13. To evaluate the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in enhancing the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners.
14. To identify the specific challenges that 8th-grade ESL learners face in developing their speaking skills in a cooperative learning environment.
15. To examine the role of teachers in facilitating cooperative learning activities that influence the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners.

Research Questions:

13. To what extent do cooperative learning strategies improve the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners?
14. What challenges do 8th-grade ESL learners encounter in improving their speaking skills within a cooperative learning environment?
15. What is the role of teachers in planning and conducting the cooperative learning activities that influence the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners?

Participation Details:

As a participant, you will be involved in a one-on-one semi-structured interview. The interview will focus on your experiences, perceptions, and insights related to cooperative learning and its impact on students' speaking skills and your supporting role as a facilitator. The interview will be conducted at a mutually convenient time and is expected to last approximately 45-60 minutes.

Confidentiality:

Your responses will be kept confidential. Data will be anonymised, and no identifiable information will be included in any published reports. Only the researcher will have access to the raw data.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

Contact Information for Questions:

If you have any questions about the study or your participation, please feel free to contact me at the email or phone number provided above.

Consent Statement:

By signing below, you indicate that you have read and understood the information above and that you agree to participate in this research study.

Participant Name: MQ

Signature:

M.Q

Date: 28-08-2024

Teacher Consent Form for Participation in Research Study-Teacher F

Title of Study:

The Role of Cooperative Learning in Improving the Speaking Skills of 8th-Grade ESL Learners: A Case Study of a Private Sector School in Lahore

Researcher:

Javeria Rana

M.S. TESOL Student

Lahore College for Women University

Email: eshawrana123@gmail.com

Phone: +92 349-8719013

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of cooperative learning strategies on the

speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners. This research aims to understand how these strategies affect students' engagement, confidence, and overall speaking proficiency.

Research Objectives:

16. To evaluate the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in enhancing the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners.
17. To identify the specific challenges that 8th-grade ESL learners face in developing their speaking skills in a cooperative learning environment.
18. To examine the role of teachers in facilitating cooperative learning activities that influence the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners.

Research Questions:

16. To what extent do cooperative learning strategies improve the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners?
17. What challenges do 8th-grade ESL learners encounter in improving their speaking skills within a cooperative learning environment?
18. What is the role of teachers in planning and conducting the cooperative learning activities that influence the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL learners?

Participation Details:

As a participant, you will be involved in a one-on-one semi-structured interview. The interview will focus on your experiences, perceptions, and insights related to cooperative learning and its impact on students' speaking skills and your supporting role as a facilitator. The interview will be conducted at a mutually convenient time and is expected to last approximately 45-60 minutes.

Confidentiality:

Your responses will be kept confidential. Data will be anonymised, and no identifiable information will be included in any published reports. Only the researcher will have access to the raw data.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

Contact Information for Questions:

If you have any questions about the study or your participation, please feel free to contact me at the email or phone number provided above.

Consent Statement:

By signing below, you indicate that you have read and understood the information above and that you agree to participate in this research study.

Participant Name: AJ

Signature:



Date: 29-08-2024

APPENDIX: C PARENTAL CONSENT SAMPLES

Parental Consent Form for Participation in Research Study (Sample 1)

Study Title:

The Role of Cooperative Learning in Improving the Speaking Skills of 8th-Grade ESL Learners: A Case Study OF A Private Sector School in Lahore

Researcher:

Javeria Rana

M.S. TESOL Candidate

Lahore College for Women University

Contact Information: eshawrana123@gmail.com / 0349-8719013

Introduction:

Your child is invited to participate in a research study conducted by Javeria Rana, an M.S. TESOL candidate at Lahore College for Women University (LCWU). The study focuses on the role of cooperative learning in improving English-speaking skills among 8th-grade ESL students. As cooperative learning is already a part of your child's school curriculum, this study will not require any additional activities outside of their regular schoolwork. The purpose of this consent form is to allow your child to complete a questionnaire that will help gather valuable insights for the study.

Purpose of the Study:

The goal of this research is to evaluate the impact of cooperative learning strategies, already being used in the school, on the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL students. The questionnaire will ask students to reflect on their experiences with cooperative learning and how it has affected their ability to speak English.

Procedures and Participation Details:

Your child will be asked to complete a Google Forms questionnaire containing 35 statements related to their experiences with cooperative learning and English-speaking skills. The researcher will visit the classroom to explain the purpose of the questionnaire and how to fill it out. Afterward, the questionnaire will be distributed via WhatsApp, and your child will have the option to complete it during school hours or at home at any time within one week. The estimated time for completing the questionnaire is approximately 15-20 minutes.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your child can choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Participation or non-participation will not affect your child's academic standing or their relationship with the school or the researcher.

Confidentiality:

All information collected through the questionnaire will remain confidential. Your child's responses will be anonymous, and no personal identifying information will be included in the final research results. The data will be used solely for academic purposes and stored securely in accordance with ethical guidelines. The data will be retained for five years and then destroyed.

Potential Benefits and Risks:

There are no known risks associated with this study. Participation involves completing a questionnaire that reflects on existing classroom practices. While there is no direct benefit to participating, your child's input will help contribute to understanding the role of cooperative learning in improving English-speaking skills in the classroom.

Compensation:

There is no monetary compensation for participating in this study.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study, you may contact the researcher, [Javeria Rana], at [eshawrana123@gmail.com] or [0349-8719013]. If you have concerns about your child's rights as a participant, you may contact the Unique School System administration.

Consent Statement:

I have read the information provided above. I understand the nature of the study and give my consent for my child, to participate by completing the questionnaire. I am aware that participation is voluntary and that my child can withdraw at any time without penalty.

Parent/Guardian Name: A.K.

Parent/Guardian Signature: A.K

Date: 9-05-2024

Child's Name: B.A.

For Researcher Use Only:

Javeria

Researcher Signature:

Date: 13-05-2024

Javeria Rana

M.S. TESOL candidate

Lahore College for Women University

Parental Consent Form for Participation in Research Study (Sample 2)

Study Title:

The Role of Cooperative Learning in Improving the Speaking Skills of 8th-Grade ESL Learners: A Case Study OF A Private Sector School in Lahore

Researcher:

Javeria Rana

M.S. TESOL Candidate

Lahore College for Women University

Contact Information: eshawrana123@gmail.com / 0349-8719013

Introduction:

Your child is invited to participate in a research study conducted by Javeria Rana, an M.S. TESOL candidate at Lahore College for Women University (LCWU). The study focuses on the role of cooperative learning in improving English-speaking skills among 8th-grade ESL students. As cooperative learning is already a part of your child's school curriculum, this study will not require any additional activities outside of their regular schoolwork. The purpose of this consent form is to allow your child to complete a questionnaire that will help gather valuable insights for the study.

Purpose of the Study:

The goal of this research is to evaluate the impact of cooperative learning strategies, already being used in the school, on the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL students. The questionnaire will ask students to reflect on their experiences with cooperative learning and how it has affected their ability to speak English.

Procedures and Participation Details:

Your child will be asked to complete a Google Forms questionnaire containing 35 statements related to their experiences with cooperative learning and English-speaking skills. The researcher will visit the classroom to explain the purpose of the questionnaire and how to fill it out. Afterward, the questionnaire will be distributed via WhatsApp, and your child will have the option to complete it during school hours or at home at any time within one week. The estimated time for completing the questionnaire is approximately 15-20 minutes.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your child can choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Participation or non-participation will not affect your child's academic standing or their relationship with the school or the researcher.

Confidentiality:

All information collected through the questionnaire will remain confidential. Your child's responses will be anonymous, and no personal identifying information will be included in the final research results. The data will be used solely for academic purposes and stored securely in accordance with ethical guidelines. The data will be retained for five years and then destroyed.

Potential Benefits and Risks:

There are no known risks associated with this study. Participation involves completing a questionnaire that reflects on existing classroom practices. While there is no direct benefit to participating, your child's input will help contribute to understanding the role of cooperative learning in improving English-speaking skills in the classroom.

Compensation:

There is no monetary compensation for participating in this study.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study, you may contact the researcher, [Javeria Rana], at [eshawrana123@gmail.com] or [0349-8719013]. If you have concerns about your child's rights as a participant, you may contact the Unique School System administration.

Consent Statement:

I have read the information provided above. I understand the nature of the study and give my consent for my child, to participate by completing the questionnaire. I am aware that participation is voluntary and that my child can withdraw at any time without penalty.

Parent/Guardian Name: F.M

Parent/Guardian Signature: FM

Date: 7-05-2024

Child's Name: A.R

For Researcher Use Only:



Researcher Signature:

Date: 13-05-2024

Javeria Rana

M.S. TESOL candidate

Lahore College for Women University

Parental Consent Form for Participation in Research Study (Sample 3)

Study Title:

The Role of Cooperative Learning in Improving the Speaking Skills of 8th-Grade ESL Learners: A Case Study OF A Private Sector School in Lahore

Researcher:

Javeria Rana

M.S. TESOL Candidate

Lahore College for Women University

Contact Information: eshawrana123@gmail.com / 0349-8719013

Introduction:

Your child is invited to participate in a research study conducted by Javeria Rana, an M.S. TESOL candidate at Lahore College for Women University (LCWU). The study focuses on the role of cooperative learning in improving English-speaking skills among 8th-grade ESL students. As cooperative learning is already a part of your child's school curriculum, this

study will not require any additional activities outside of their regular schoolwork. The purpose of this consent form is to allow your child to complete a questionnaire that will help gather valuable insights for the study.

Purpose of the Study:

The goal of this research is to evaluate the impact of cooperative learning strategies, already being used in the school, on the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL students. The questionnaire will ask students to reflect on their experiences with cooperative learning and how it has affected their ability to speak English.

Procedures and Participation Details:

Your child will be asked to complete a Google Forms questionnaire containing 35 statements related to their experiences with cooperative learning and English-speaking skills. The researcher will visit the classroom to explain the purpose of the questionnaire and how to fill it out. Afterward, the questionnaire will be distributed via WhatsApp, and your child will have the option to complete it during school hours or at home at any time within one week. The estimated time for completing the questionnaire is approximately 15-20 minutes.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your child can choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Participation or non-participation will not affect your child's academic standing or their relationship with the school or the researcher.

Confidentiality:

All information collected through the questionnaire will remain confidential. Your child's responses will be anonymous, and no personal identifying information will be included in the

final research results. The data will be used solely for academic purposes and stored securely in accordance with ethical guidelines. The data will be retained for five years and then destroyed.

Potential Benefits and Risks:

There are no known risks associated with this study. Participation involves completing a questionnaire that reflects on existing classroom practices. While there is no direct benefit to participating, your child's input will help contribute to understanding the role of cooperative learning in improving English-speaking skills in the classroom.

Compensation:

There is no monetary compensation for participating in this study.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study, you may contact the researcher, [Javeria Rana], at [eshawrana123@gmail.com] or [0349-8719013]. If you have concerns about your child’s rights as a participant, you may contact the Unique School System administration.

Consent Statement:

I have read the information provided above. I understand the nature of the study and give my consent for my child, to participate by completing the questionnaire. I am aware that participation is voluntary and that my child can withdraw at any time without penalty.

Parent/Guardian Name: S.I.

Parent/Guardian Signature: 

Date: 6-05-2024

Child's Name: F.N.

For Researcher Use Only:

Researcher Signature: 

Date: 13-05-2024

Javeria Rana

M.S. TESOL candidate

Lahore College for Women University

Parental Consent Form for Participation in Research Study (Sample 4)

Study Title:

The Role of Cooperative Learning in Improving the Speaking Skills of 8th-Grade ESL Learners: A Case Study OF A Private Sector School in Lahore

Researcher:

Javeria Rana

M.S. TESOL Candidate

Lahore College for Women University

Contact Information: eshawrana123@gmail.com / 0349-8719013

Introduction:

Your child is invited to participate in a research study conducted by Javeria Rana, an M.S. TESOL candidate at Lahore College for Women University (LCWU). The study focuses on the role of cooperative learning in improving English-speaking skills among 8th-grade ESL

students. As cooperative learning is already a part of your child's school curriculum, this study will not require any additional activities outside of their regular schoolwork. The purpose of this consent form is to allow your child to complete a questionnaire that will help gather valuable insights for the study.

Purpose of the Study:

The goal of this research is to evaluate the impact of cooperative learning strategies, already being used in the school, on the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL students. The questionnaire will ask students to reflect on their experiences with cooperative learning and how it has affected their ability to speak English.

Procedures and Participation Details:

Your child will be asked to complete a Google Forms questionnaire containing 35 statements related to their experiences with cooperative learning and English-speaking skills. The researcher will visit the classroom to explain the purpose of the questionnaire and how to fill it out. Afterward, the questionnaire will be distributed via WhatsApp, and your child will have the option to complete it during school hours or at home at any time within one week. The estimated time for completing the questionnaire is approximately 15-20 minutes.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your child can choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Participation or non-participation will not affect your child’s academic standing or their relationship with the school or the researcher.

Confidentiality:

All information collected through the questionnaire will remain confidential. Your child’s

responses will be anonymous, and no personal identifying information will be included in the final research results. The data will be used solely for academic purposes and stored securely in accordance with ethical guidelines. The data will be retained for five years and then destroyed.

Potential Benefits and Risks:

There are no known risks associated with this study. Participation involves completing a questionnaire that reflects on existing classroom practices. While there is no direct benefit to participating, your child's input will help contribute to understanding the role of cooperative learning in improving English-speaking skills in the classroom.

Compensation:

There is no monetary compensation for participating in this study.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study, you may contact the researcher, [Javeria Rana], at [eshawrana123@gmail.com] or [0349-8719013]. If you have concerns about your child’s rights as a participant, you may contact the Unique School System administration.

Consent Statement:

I have read the information provided above. I understand the nature of the study and give my consent for my child, to participate by completing the questionnaire. I am aware that participation is voluntary and that my child can withdraw at any time without penalty.

Parent/Guardian Name: A.S.

AS

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date: 3-05-2024

Child's Name: Z.M.

For Researcher Use Only:

Researcher Signature: 

Date: 13-05-2024

Javeria Rana

M.S. TESOL candidate

Lahore College for Women University

Parental Consent Form for Participation in Research Study (Sample 5)

Study Title:

The Role of Cooperative Learning in Improving the Speaking Skills of 8th-Grade ESL Learners: A Case Study OF A Private Sector School in Lahore

Researcher:

Javeria Rana

M.S. TESOL Candidate

Lahore College for Women University

Contact Information: eshawrana123@gmail.com / 0349-8719013

Introduction:

Your child is invited to participate in a research study conducted by Javeria Rana, an M.S.

TESOL candidate at Lahore College for Women University (LCWU). The study focuses on the role of cooperative learning in improving English-speaking skills among 8th-grade ESL students. As cooperative learning is already a part of your child's school curriculum, this study will not require any additional activities outside of their regular schoolwork. The purpose of this consent form is to allow your child to complete a questionnaire that will help gather valuable insights for the study.

Purpose of the Study:

The goal of this research is to evaluate the impact of cooperative learning strategies, already being used in the school, on the speaking skills of 8th-grade ESL students. The questionnaire will ask students to reflect on their experiences with cooperative learning and how it has affected their ability to speak English.

Procedures and Participation Details:

Your child will be asked to complete a Google Forms questionnaire containing 35 statements related to their experiences with cooperative learning and English-speaking skills. The researcher will visit the classroom to explain the purpose of the questionnaire and how to fill it out. Afterward, the questionnaire will be distributed via WhatsApp, and your child will have the option to complete it during school hours or at home at any time within one week. The estimated time for completing the questionnaire is approximately 15-20 minutes.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your child can choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Participation or non-participation will not affect your child’s academic standing or their relationship with the school or the researcher.

Confidentiality:

All information collected through the questionnaire will remain confidential. Your child's responses will be anonymous, and no personal identifying information will be included in the final research results. The data will be used solely for academic purposes and stored securely in accordance with ethical guidelines. The data will be retained for five years and then destroyed.

Potential Benefits and Risks:

There are no known risks associated with this study. Participation involves completing a questionnaire that reflects on existing classroom practices. While there is no direct benefit to participating, your child's input will help contribute to understanding the role of cooperative learning in improving English-speaking skills in the classroom.

Compensation:

There is no monetary compensation for participating in this study.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study, you may contact the researcher, [Javeria Rana], at [eshawrana123@gmail.com] or [0349-8719013]. If you have concerns about your child's rights as a participant, you may contact the Unique School System administration.

Consent Statement:

I have read the information provided above. I understand the nature of the study and give my consent for my child, to participate by completing the questionnaire. I am aware that participation is voluntary and that my child can withdraw at any time without penalty.

Parent/Guardian Name: O.K.

Parent/Guardian Signature: OK

Date: 3-05-2024

Child's Name: H.R

For Researcher Use Only:

Researcher Signature: Javeria

Date: 13-05-2024

Javeria Rana

M.S. TESOL candidate

Lahore College for Women University

APPENDIX: D STUDENT CONSENT SAMPLES

Student Assent Form (Sample 1)

Study Title:

The Role of Cooperative Learning in Improving the Speaking Skills of 8th-Grade ESL Learners: A Case Study OF A Private Sector School in Lahore

Researcher:

Javeria Rana

M.S. TESOL Candidate

Lahore College for Women University

Contact Information: eshawrana123@gmail.com / 0349-8719013

Why Are We Doing This Study?

We are doing this study to learn more about how students like you improve their English-speaking skills in a classroom setting where cooperative learning is used. Cooperative learning means working together with your classmates in groups to help each other learn. This approach is already used in your school, and we would like to understand how it helps.

What Will You Do?

If you agree to be part of this study, you will fill out a **questionnaire with 35 statements**. You can complete the questionnaire at school or home, using your phone or computer, through a Google Form that will be shared with you. It will take about **15–20 minutes** to complete, and you will have **one week** to fill it out.

The researcher will come to your class to explain the questionnaire and how to fill it. You will then receive the link to the form through WhatsApp.

Do You Have to Participate?

No, it's your choice. You don't have to fill out the questionnaire if you don't want to. You can also stop at any time without getting into trouble, and no one will be upset with you. Even if your parents give permission, you can still decide not to participate.

Will It Affect Your Grades?

No, this study will **not affect your grades** or school activities. Your answers will not be shared with your teachers, and they will not know who filled out the form.

Is It Confidential?

Yes, your responses will be **completely anonymous**. This means that your name will not be attached to your answers, and no one will be able to identify you. Your information will only be used for research purposes.

What Happens After the Study?

The information we gather will help us understand how cooperative learning helps students improve their speaking skills. You will not be identified in the research report.

Do You Have Any Questions?

If you have any questions now or later, you can ask the researcher or your teacher.

If you agree to participate, please sign below:

I have read and understood the above information, and I agree to take part in this study.

Name: U.I

Class: 8-A

Signature: 

Date: 17-05-2024

Student Assent Form (Sample 2)

Study Title:

The Role of Cooperative Learning in Improving the Speaking Skills of 8th-Grade ESL Learners: A Case Study OF A Private Sector School in Lahore

Researcher:

Javeria Rana

M.S. TESOL Candidate

Lahore College for Women University

Contact Information: eshawrana123@gmail.com / 0349-8719013

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We are doing this study to learn more about how students like you improve their English-speaking skills in a classroom setting where cooperative learning is used. Cooperative learning means working together with your classmates in groups to help each other learn. This approach is already used in your school, and we would like to understand how it helps.

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If you agree to be part of this study, you will fill out a **questionnaire with 35 statements**. You can complete the questionnaire at school or home, using your phone or computer, through a Google Form that will be shared with you. It will take about **15–20 minutes** to complete, and you will have **one week** to fill it out.

The researcher will come to your class to explain the questionnaire and how to fill it. You will then receive the link to the form through WhatsApp.

Do You Have to Participate?

No, it's your choice. You don't have to fill out the questionnaire if you don't want to. You can also stop at any time without getting into trouble, and no one will be upset with you. Even if your parents give permission, you can still decide not to participate.

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No, this study will **not affect your grades** or school activities. Your answers will not be shared with your teachers, and they will not know who filled out the form.

Is It Confidential?

Yes, your responses will be **completely anonymous**. This means that your name will not be attached to your answers, and no one will be able to identify you. Your information will only be used for research purposes.

What Happens After the Study?

The information we gather will help us understand how cooperative learning helps students improve their speaking skills. You will not be identified in the research report.

Do You Have Any Questions?

If you have any questions now or later, you can ask the researcher or your teacher.

If you agree to participate, please sign below:

I have read and understood the above information, and I agree to take part in this study.

Name: N.A

Class:8-C

Signature: NA

Date: 17-05-2024

Student Assent Form (Sample 3)

Study Title:

The Role of Cooperative Learning in Improving the Speaking Skills of 8th-Grade ESL Learners: A Case Study OF A Private Sector School in Lahore

Researcher:

Javeria Rana

M.S. TESOL Candidate

Lahore College for Women University

Contact Information: eshawrana123@gmail.com / 0349-8719013

Why Are We Doing This Study?

We are doing this study to learn more about how students like you improve their English-speaking skills in a classroom setting where cooperative learning is used. Cooperative learning means working together with your classmates in groups to help each other learn. This approach is already used in your school, and we would like to understand how it helps.

What Will You Do?

If you agree to be part of this study, you will fill out a **questionnaire with 35 statements**. You can complete the questionnaire at school or home, using your phone or computer, through a Google Form that will be shared with you. It will take about **15–20 minutes** to complete, and you will have **one week** to fill it out.

The researcher will come to your class to explain the questionnaire and how to fill it. You will then receive the link to the form through WhatsApp.

Do You Have to Participate?

No, it's your choice. You don't have to fill out the questionnaire if you don't want to. You can also stop at any time without getting into trouble, and no one will be upset with you. Even if your parents give permission, you can still decide not to participate.

Will It Affect Your Grades?

No, this study will **not affect your grades** or school activities. Your answers will not be shared with your teachers, and they will not know who filled out the form.

Is It Confidential?

Yes, your responses will be **completely anonymous**. This means that your name will not be attached to your answers, and no one will be able to identify you. Your information will only be used for research purposes.

What Happens After the Study?

The information we gather will help us understand how cooperative learning helps students improve their speaking skills. You will not be identified in the research report.

Do You Have Any Questions?

If you have any questions now or later, you can ask the researcher or your teacher.

If you agree to participate, please sign below:

I have read and understood the above information, and I agree to take part in this study.

Name: A.H.

Class: 8-B

Signature: AH

Date: 20-05-2024

Student Assent Form (Sample 4)

Study Title:

The Role of Cooperative Learning in Improving the Speaking Skills of 8th-Grade ESL Learners: A Case Study OF A Private Sector School in Lahore

Researcher:

Javeria Rana

M.S. TESOL Candidate

Lahore College for Women University

Contact Information: eshawrana123@gmail.com / 0349-8719013

Why Are We Doing This Study?

We are doing this study to learn more about how students like you improve their English-speaking skills in a classroom setting where cooperative learning is used. Cooperative learning means working together with your classmates in groups to help each other learn. This approach is already used in your school, and we would like to understand how it helps.

What Will You Do?

If you agree to be part of this study, you will fill out a **questionnaire with 35 statements**. You can complete the questionnaire at school or home, using your phone or computer, through a Google Form that will be shared with you. It will take about **15–20 minutes** to complete, and you will have **one week** to fill it out.

The researcher will come to your class to explain the questionnaire and how to fill it. You will then receive the link to the form through WhatsApp.

Do You Have to Participate?

No, it's your choice. You don't have to fill out the questionnaire if you don't want to. You can also stop at any time without getting into trouble, and no one will be upset with you. Even if your parents give permission, you can still decide not to participate.

Will It Affect Your Grades?

No, this study will **not affect your grades** or school activities. Your answers will not be shared with your teachers, and they will not know who filled out the form.

Is It Confidential?

Yes, your responses will be **completely anonymous**. This means that your name will not be attached to your answers, and no one will be able to identify you. Your information will only be used for research purposes.

What Happens After the Study?

The information we gather will help us understand how cooperative learning helps students improve their speaking skills. You will not be identified in the research report.

Do You Have Any Questions?

If you have any questions now or later, you can ask the researcher or your teacher.

If you agree to participate, please sign below:

I have read and understood the above information, and I agree to take part in this study.

Name: M.T

Class: 8-C

Signature: *MT*

Date: 20-05-2024

Student Assent Form (Sample 5)

Study Title:

The Role of Cooperative Learning in Improving the Speaking Skills of 8th-Grade ESL Learners: A Case Study OF A Private Sector School in Lahore

Researcher:

Javeria Rana

M.S. TESOL Candidate

Lahore College for Women University

Contact Information: eshawrana123@gmail.com / 0349-8719013

Why Are We Doing This Study?

We are doing this study to learn more about how students like you improve their English-speaking skills in a classroom setting where cooperative learning is used. Cooperative learning means working together with your classmates in groups to help each other learn. This approach is already used in your school, and we would like to understand how it helps.

What Will You Do?

If you agree to be part of this study, you will fill out a **questionnaire with 35 statements**. You can complete the questionnaire at school or home, using your phone or computer,

through a Google Form that will be shared with you. It will take about **15–20 minutes** to complete, and you will have **one week** to fill it out.

The researcher will come to your class to explain the questionnaire and how to fill it. You will then receive the link to the form through WhatsApp.

Do You Have to Participate?

No, it's your choice. You don't have to fill out the questionnaire if you don't want to. You can also stop at any time without getting into trouble, and no one will be upset with you. Even if your parents give permission, you can still decide not to participate.

Will It Affect Your Grades?

No, this study will **not affect your grades** or school activities. Your answers will not be shared with your teachers, and they will not know who filled out the form.

Is It Confidential?

Yes, your responses will be **completely anonymous**. This means that your name will not be attached to your answers, and no one will be able to identify you. Your information will only be used for research purposes.

What Happens After the Study?

The information we gather will help us understand how cooperative learning helps students improve their speaking skills. You will not be identified in the research report.

Do You Have Any Questions?

If you have any questions now or later, you can ask the researcher or your teacher.

If you agree to participate, please sign below:

I have read and understood the above information, and I agree to take part in this study.

Name: K.N.

Class: 8-B

Signature: KN

Date: 21-05-2024

APPENDIX: E STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE (Google Forms)

Student Questionnaire for Grade-8 ESL students: Cooperative Learning and Speaking Skills

This questionnaire is designed to assess students' attitudes, challenges, and perceptions related to cooperative learning and its impact on their speaking skills. The data collected will help understand the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in improving speaking skills among 8th-grade ESL learners.

Instructions: Please complete all sections. Read each statement carefully and indicate how much you agree or disagree with it by selecting the appropriate option. The following scale is used:

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Theme 1: Engagement and Participation

1. I actively participate in group discussions during cooperative learning sessions.
2. Cooperative learning activities keep me engaged throughout the lesson.
3. I feel more comfortable speaking in English when working in a group.

Theme 2: Motivation

4. Cooperative learning motivates me to improve my speaking skills.

5. Cooperative learning encourages me to set personal goals for improving my speaking skills.
6. Cooperative learning encourages me to take initiative in speaking tasks.

Theme 3: Speaking Skill Development: Language Accuracy, Fluency, Pronunciation, Intonation, and Linguistic Complexity

7. Group work helps me improve the accuracy of my spoken English.
8. Cooperative learning activities have enhanced my fluency in English speaking.
9. I have improved my pronunciation through group discussions and activities.
10. Cooperative learning helps me focus on the correct intonation while speaking.
11. I feel more confident in using complex sentences during cooperative learning tasks.

Theme 4: Vocabulary Usage

12. I learn new vocabulary more effectively through cooperative learning activities.
13. Cooperative learning helps me use a wider range of vocabulary when speaking.
14. I feel more confident experimenting with new vocabulary in group discussions.

Theme 5: Social Interaction and Peer Support

15. I receive helpful feedback from my peers during group work.
16. Cooperative learning has improved my ability to interact socially in English.
17. My peers help me improve my speaking skills during cooperative learning sessions.

Theme 6: Group Dynamics and Collaboration

18. I work well with my group members during cooperative learning activities.
19. Cooperative learning helps build a positive relationship among classmates.
20. I feel that my contributions are valued in group discussions.

Theme 7: Critical Thinking Development

21. Group activities help me develop better critical thinking skills when speaking in English.
22. Cooperative learning encourages me to think more deeply about the topics discussed.
23. I am able to express my thoughts more clearly during group tasks.

Theme 8: Overcoming Challenges and Barriers

24. Cooperative learning helps me overcome my fear of speaking in English.
25. I find it easier to express myself during group activities than individual tasks.
26. Group work allows me to practice speaking without feeling judged.
27. Group activities help me address language proficiency gaps with my classmates.
28. I find that cooperative learning reduces inequalities in participation among students.

Theme 9: Cognitive Complexity

29. Cooperative learning helps me connect ideas and organize my thoughts more logically when speaking in English.
30. Group discussions help me explore complex ideas and express them effectively in English.

Theme 10: Confidence

31. My confidence in speaking English has improved through cooperative learning activities.
32. I feel more self-assured when presenting my ideas in English during group discussions.

Theme 11: Teacher's Support and Facilitation

33. The teacher's facilitation during cooperative learning activities helps me speak better English.

34. I receive useful feedback from my teacher during group activities.

35. The strategies used by my teacher in group work improve my speaking skills.

APPENDIX F: GOOGLE FORMS RESULTS

Student Questionnaire for Grade-8 ESL students: Cooperative Learning and Speaking Skills

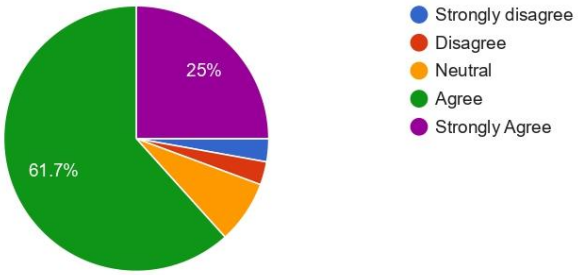
250 responses

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1. I actively participate in group discussions during cooperative learning sessions.

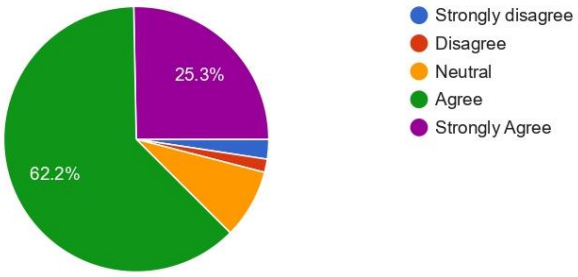
248 responses



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2. Cooperative learning activities keep me engaged throughout the lesson.

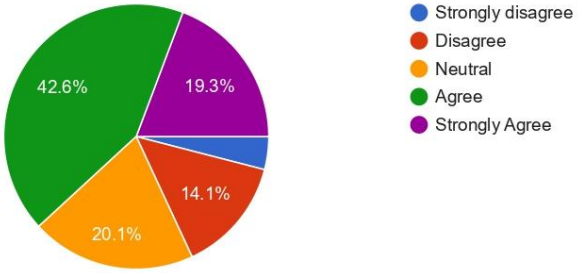
249 responses



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3. I feel more comfortable speaking in English when working in a group.

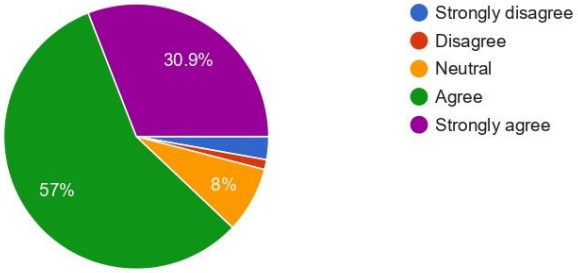
249 responses



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4. Cooperative learning motivates me to improve my speaking skills.

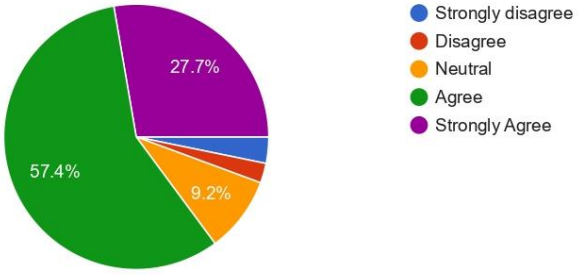
249 responses



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5. Cooperative learning encourages me to set personal goals for improving my speaking skills.

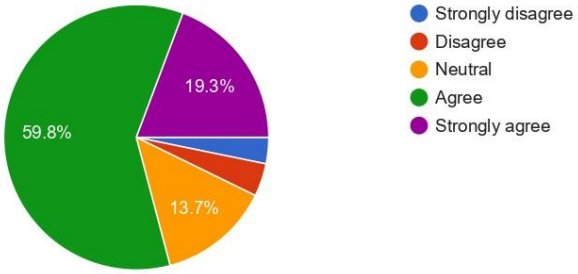
249 responses



6. Cooperative learning encourages me to take initiative in speaking tasks.

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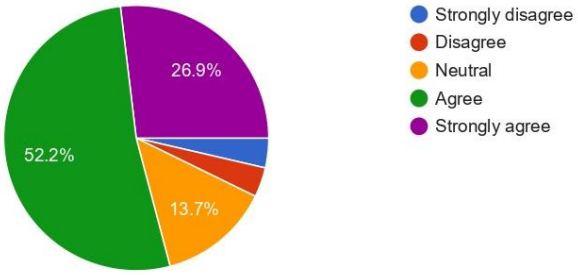
249 responses



7. Group work helps me improve the accuracy of my spoken English.

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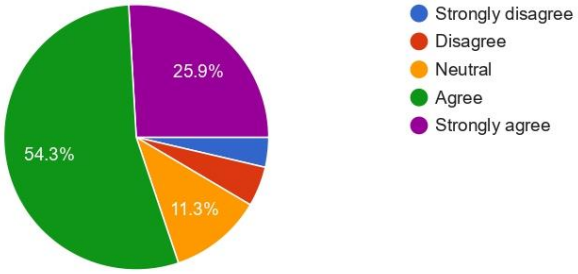
249 responses



8. Cooperative learning activities have enhanced my fluency in English speaking.

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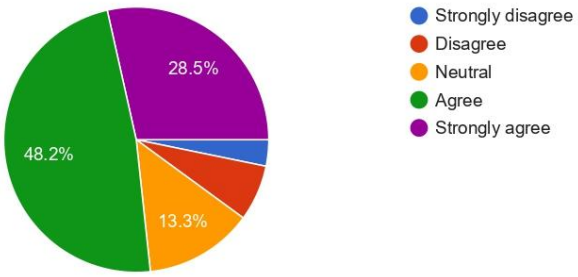
247 responses



9. I have improved my pronunciation through group discussions and activities.

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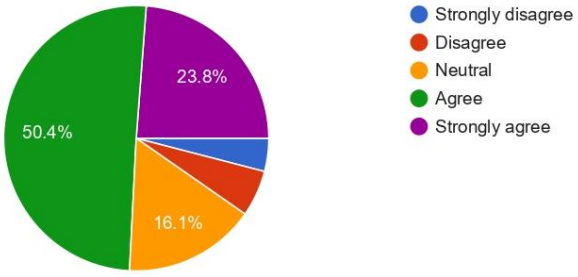
249 responses



10. Cooperative learning helps me focus on the correct intonation while speaking.

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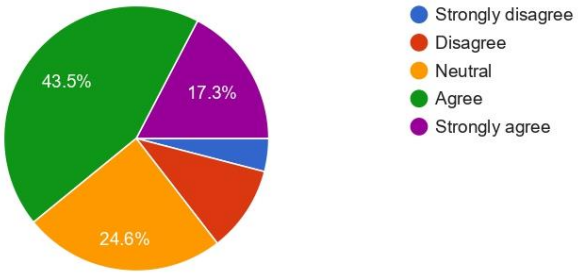
248 responses



11. I feel more confident in using complex sentences during cooperative learning tasks.

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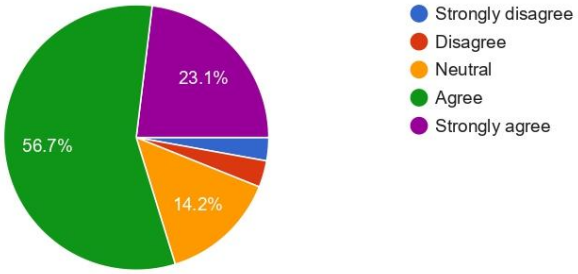
248 responses



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12. I learn new vocabulary more effectively through cooperative learning activities.

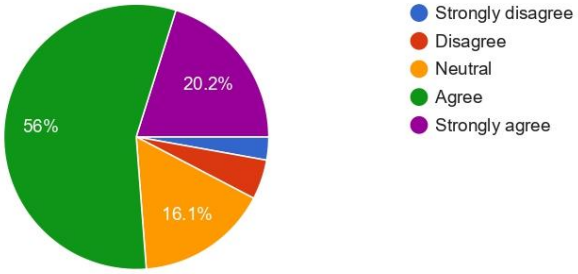
247 responses



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13. Cooperative learning helps me use a wider range of vocabulary when speaking.

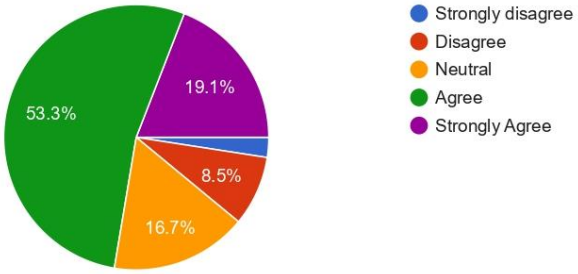
248 responses



14. I feel more confident experimenting with new vocabulary in group discussions.

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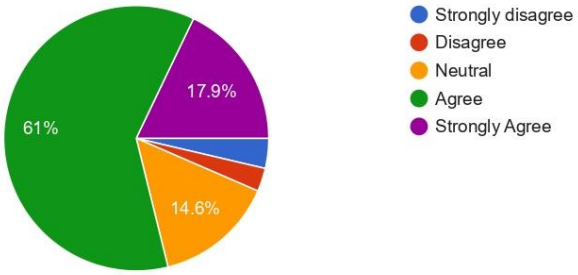
246 responses



15. I receive helpful feedback from my peers during group work.

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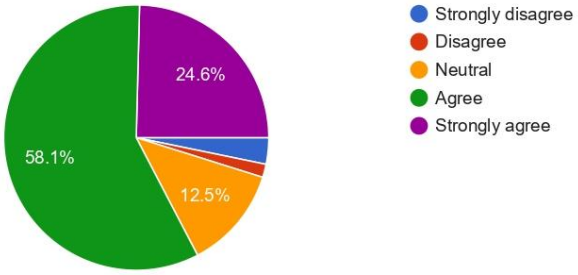
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16. Cooperative learning has improved my ability to interact socially in English.

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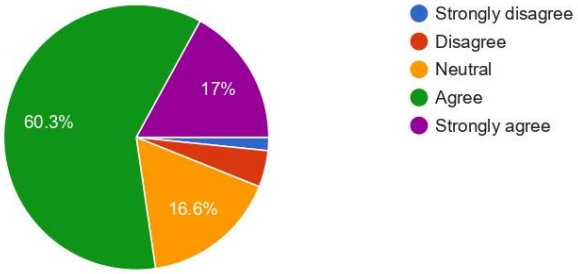
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17. My peers help me improve my speaking skills during cooperative learning sessions.

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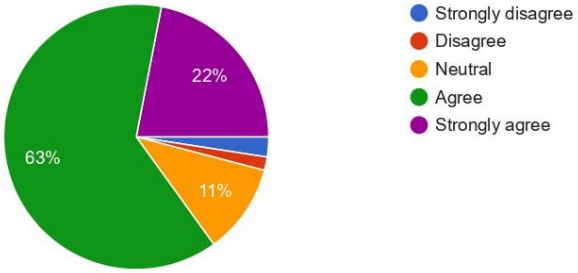
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18. I work well with my group members during cooperative learning activities.

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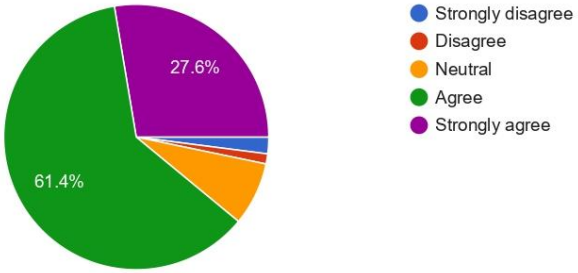
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19. Cooperative learning helps build a positive relationship among classmates.

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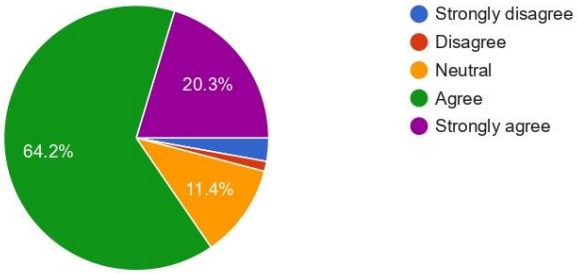
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20. I feel that my contributions are valued in group discussions.

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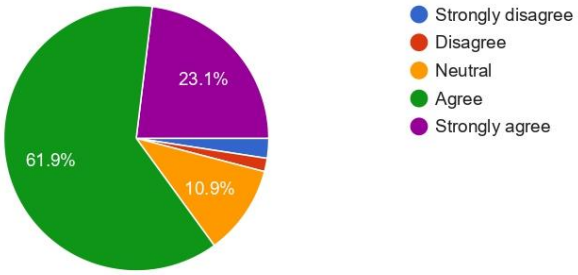
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21. Group activities help me develop better critical thinking skills when speaking in English.

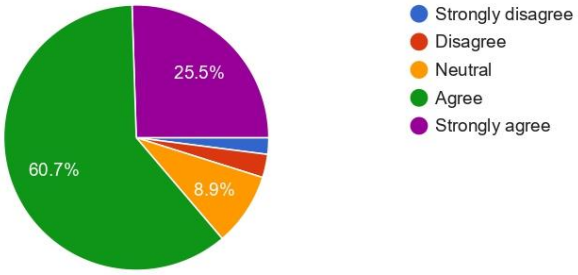
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22. Cooperative learning encourages me to think more deeply about the topics discussed.

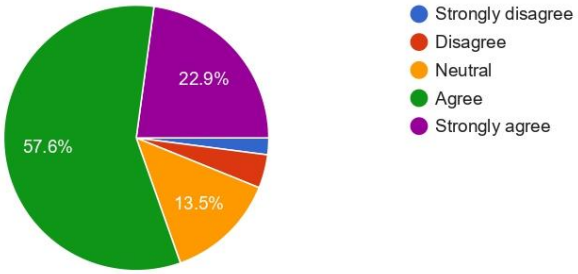
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23. I am able to express my thoughts more clearly during group tasks.

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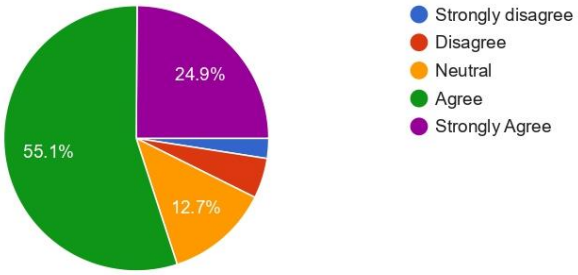
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24. Cooperative learning helps me overcome my fear of speaking in English.

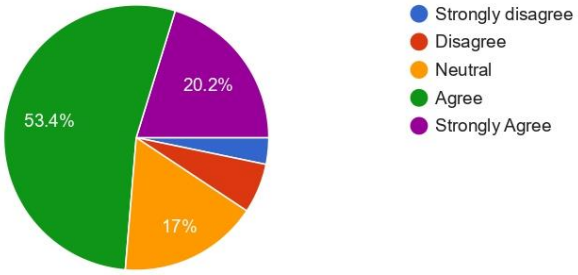
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25. I find it easier to express myself during group activities than individual tasks.

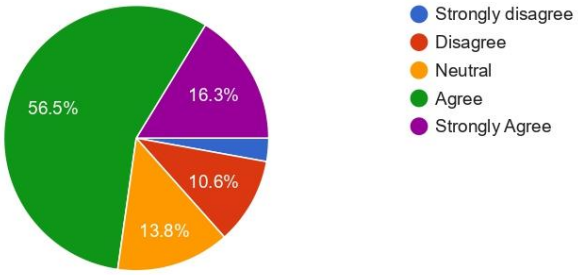
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26. Group work allows me to practice speaking without feeling judged.

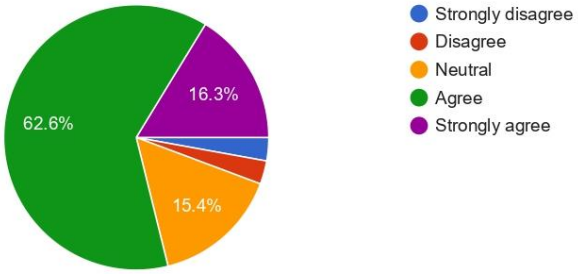
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27. Group activities help me address language proficiency gaps with my classmates.

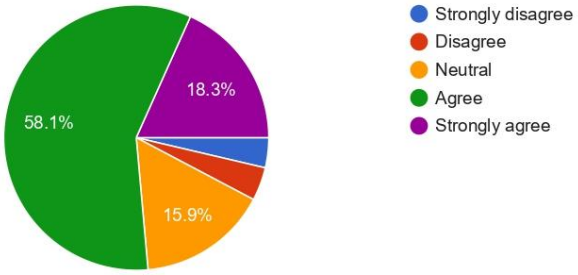
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28. I find that cooperative learning reduces inequalities in participation among students.

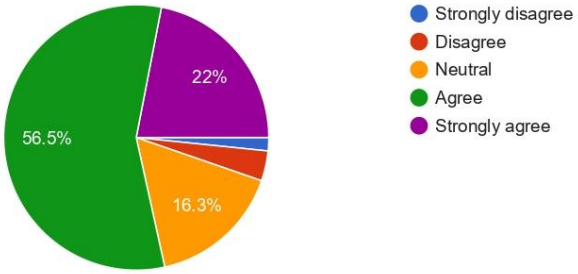
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29. Cooperative learning helps me connect ideas and organize my thoughts more logically when speaking in English.

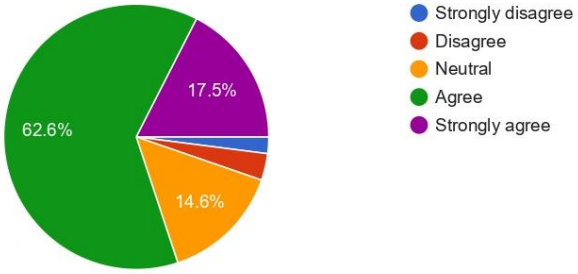
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30. Group discussions help me explore complex ideas and express them effectively in English.

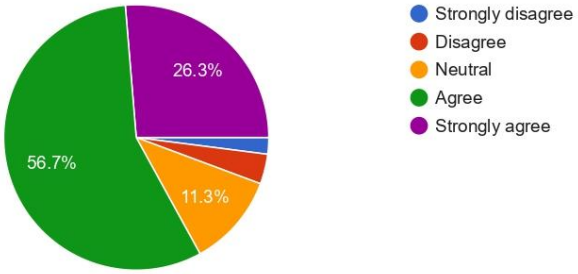
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31. My confidence in speaking English has improved through cooperative learning activities.

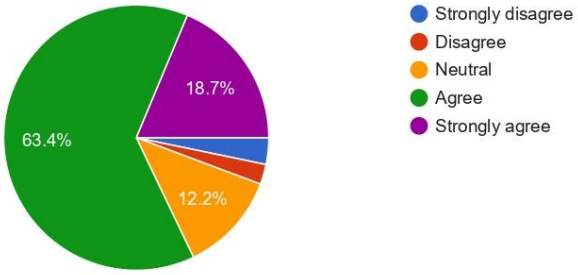
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32. I feel more self-assured when presenting my ideas in English during group discussions.

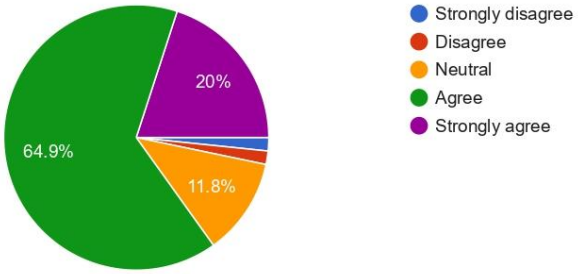
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33. The teacher's facilitation during cooperative learning activities helps me speak better English.

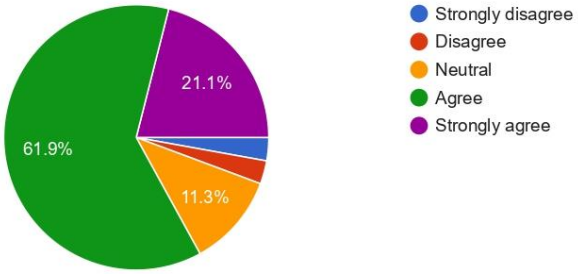
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34. I receive useful feedback from my teacher during group activities.

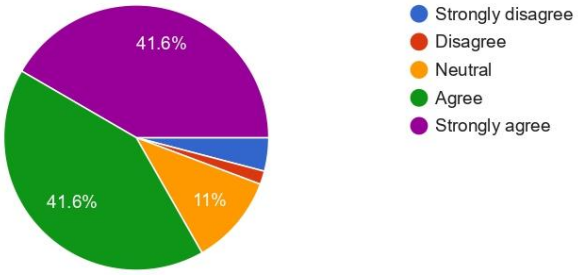
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35. The strategies used by my teacher in group work improve my speaking skills.

245 responses



APPENDIX G: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Name of School:	**Date:**
Class:	**Subject:**
Interviewer:	**Subject Teacher name:**

This set of questions aims to explore the challenges faced by 8th-grade ESL learners in developing speaking skills, the impact of cooperative learning, and how these strategies are implemented and observed in the classroom. These questions are designed to prompt deeper reflection and analysis, and elicit detailed responses, encouraging teachers to think critically about the broader implications and contextual factors influencing the effectiveness of cooperative learning in developing speaking skills among their 8th-grade ESL learners.

Background Questions

1. **Can you please describe your background and experience in teaching ESL, particularly for 8th-grade students?**
2. **How long have you been teaching at this school?**

Main Questions

Theme 1: Engagement and Participation

1. How do you observe student engagement and participation during spoken English cooperative learning activities in your class?

Theme 2: Motivation

2. In what ways do you think cooperative learning affects students' motivation to speak in English?

Theme 3: Speaking Skill Development: Language Accuracy, Fluency, Pronunciation, Intonation, and Linguistic Complexity

3. Do you see any improvements in students' language accuracy during cooperative learning activities?
4. In what ways do you observe growth in students' oral fluency in English as a result of cooperative learning sessions?
5. How has cooperative learning impacted students' pronunciation when speaking English?

Theme 4: Vocabulary Usage

6. Have you noticed changes in students' vocabulary usage as a result of cooperative learning activities in their spoken English lessons? Could you provide examples?

Theme 5: Social Interaction and Peer Support

7. How do you perceive the role of peer support in enhancing students' speaking skills during cooperative learning sessions?

Theme 6: Group Dynamics and Collaboration

8. How do group dynamics influence students' language learning outcomes in cooperative speaking tasks?

Theme 7: Critical Thinking Development

9. Can you share how cooperative learning activities have influenced students' ability to think critically when expressing their ideas in English?

Theme 8: Overcoming Challenges and Barriers

10. What challenges do students typically face in spoken English competency during cooperative learning, and how do they overcome these barriers when speaking English?

Theme 9: Cognitive Complexity

11. How do you evaluate students' ability to handle complex cognitive tasks and express multifaceted ideas in English during cooperative learning activities?

Theme 10: Confidence

12. Have you observed any shifts in students' confidence when speaking English as a result of cooperative learning? How do they manifest?

Theme 11: Teacher's Support and Facilitation

13. How do you tailor your support to students during cooperative learning to enhance their speaking skills?
14. What strategies do you employ to facilitate effective group work and ensure balanced participation in speaking tasks?
15. In what ways do you provide feedback to students during cooperative learning sessions to help them improve their speaking skills?

Additional General and Reflection Questions:

16. How do you think cooperative learning compares to traditional teaching methods in improving students' English speaking skills?
17. Could you describe any specific instances where cooperative learning led to noticeable improvements in students' speaking abilities?

APPENDIX H: TRANSCRIPTS OF TEACHERS INTERVIEWS

Interview Transcript: Teacher A

Name of School: Unique School System	**Date: 22-08-2024**
Class: 8	**Subject: English**
Interviewer: Javeria Rana	**Subject Teacher name: Teacher A.** **(Experienced Teacher) SR**

Background Questions

Question 1: Can you please describe your background and experience in teaching ESL, particularly for 8th-grade students?

I have been an ESL teacher for almost ten years and I mainly work with middle school kids. I have been teaching 8th grade for the past five years. I have a Masters in TESOL and attended many workshops and professional development courses on how to teach ESL effectively to this age group. I have learned from my experience that it is an important year for language acquisition, as eighth grade serves the role of a bridge between primary school and high-school-level English.

Question 2: How long have you been teaching at this school?

I have been in this school for almost 5 years. I have taught many grade levels but mostly I have taught 8th grade and I am an English teacher as well as class teacher for grade 8. Our teacher's community here is helpful and we share resources to help each other grow professionally.

Main Questions

Theme 1: Engagement and Participation

1. How do you observe student engagement and participation during spoken English cooperative learning activities in your class?

I evaluate student participation based on how active and involved they are and willing to be in the work of each group. Whenever we are having group discussions, I can see how eager students are to participate in them as well as their attitude towards working together. At the same time, I track how frequently students approach tasks set for a group and how engaged they are in working on them. One of the most indicative signs for me is initiative in asking questions and expressing interest in opinions voiced by peers in one's group.

Theme 2: Motivation

2. In what ways do you think cooperative learning affects students' motivation to speak in English?

From my perspective, and based on my experience, cooperative learning helps students to be more motivated and speak in English. It gives them opportunities, they do not feel stressed and under pressure. They try to participate fully and express their thoughts. When it comes to cooperation among students, in most cases, they feel more motivated and engaged in the process of learning. They do not seem to be afraid of making mistakes and feel not being supported, as their peers usually help them develop ideas properly. In such a case, the main feeling that appears is a sense of being a part of something. However, mutual learning might be less motivating if one feels overshadowed and notices that the performance is not as high as that of others. Thus, in some cases, motivation to speak English decreases.

Theme 3: Speaking Skill Development: Language Accuracy, Fluency, Pronunciation, Intonation, and Linguistic Complexity

3. Do you see any improvements in students' language accuracy during cooperative learning activities?

I strongly agree that cooperative learning activities bring significant improvements to the language accuracy of students. The reason is that due to the collaborative environment, they get instant feedback and correction from their peers and refine the usage of language. Besides, they usually continue discussing and learning from the mistakes and the corrections made, which enhances their accuracy over time. However, this process should remain constructive, and all students should have equal opportunities to participate.

4. In what ways do you observe growth in students' oral fluency in English as a result of cooperative learning sessions?

I consistently witness an increase in students' oral fluency as a consequence of having cooperative learning activities. The latter affords learners many chances to speak to each other in relaxed settings, through group discussions, and during interactive tasks. Students learn to speak more fluidly as they get more practice and hear their classmates talking more. They always get good at putting their thoughts into words on account of the frequent opportunities. Their conversational confidence increases.

5. How has cooperative learning impacted students' pronunciation when speaking English?

It has helped my students a great deal. I'm convinced that it has a positive effect on the pronunciation of students. It helps them to correct each other for proper pronunciation over and over in a supportive environment, providing them with the opportunity to practice it on a regular basis, which, in turn, improves their pronunciation. I think that to some extent, it can

go wrong as the students can get stuck in one's mistakes if the corrections are not done properly. The mistakes can be fossilised. It is vital for teachers to oversee the process to know if they are correcting their peers with the correct pronunciation.

Theme 4: Vocabulary Usage

6. Have you noticed changes in students' vocabulary usage as a result of cooperative learning activities in their spoken English lessons? Could you provide examples?

I have, indeed observed positive changes in the students' vocabulary usage as a result of cooperative learning activities. By taking part in group discussions and collaborative projects, the learners are being exposed to new words and contexts. Notably once, while the students were working on one of the group projects, with the focus on environmental issues and sustainable growth, the learners employed a range of vocabularies concerning sustainability which none of them might have used otherwise. Therefore, diverse vocabulary, which is used quite often in group settings, allows for a richer vocabulary in spoken English. However, it is necessary to ensure that all of the students in a group are actively engaging in the group activities, as well.

Theme 5: Social Interaction and Peer Support

7. How do you perceive the role of peer support in enhancing students' speaking skills during cooperative learning sessions?

I view peer support as/an enabling element with respect to improving students' speaking skills. Students often correct each other's mistakes or make useful suggestions for improvement of their performance during group work. However, I think that during a project or group work, because of the dynamism of student groups, the effectiveness of peer support can vary depending upon whether they are willing to support that day or not.

Theme 6: Group Dynamics and Collaboration

8. How do group dynamics influence students' language learning outcomes in cooperative speaking tasks?

Group dynamics play a pivotal role in students' language learning outcomes. When groups function well, with balanced participation and mutual respect, students often experience significant improvements in their speaking skills. For example, in well-coordinated groups, students collaborate effectively, share ideas, and engage in meaningful conversations, leading to enhanced language use. Conversely, poor group dynamics, such as conflicts or unequal participation, can hinder learning and diminish the effectiveness of cooperative tasks.

Theme 7: Critical Thinking Development

9. Can you share how cooperative learning activities have influenced students' ability to think critically when expressing their ideas in English?

Cooperative learning exercises have improved the critical thinking skills of my students a lot. Students are often expected to express opposing opinions, apply a persuasive argument in different formats, and think critically during group discussions or problem-solving tasks. Whether it is in a debate or when working on some project collaboratively, they should always question and analyze the information so that impactful reasoning is developed by them. It does more than merely enhance their speaking abilities but creates a higher level of critical engagement with the language.

Theme 8: Overcoming Challenges and Barriers

10. What challenges do students typically face in spoken English competency during cooperative learning, and how do they overcome these barriers when speaking English?

The biggest hurdle that they have to cross is English language speaking skills is confidence Students often refrain from speaking and group discussing because of the fear that they might make mistakes. So I make sure by creating a culture of safe space and a supportive environment where mistakes are seen as learning rather than failing. Also, integrating systematic communication actions and reinforcing them again is important to me. Students get confidence over a time period which contributes to their overall speaking skills.

Theme 9: Cognitive Complexity

11. How do you evaluate students' ability to handle complex cognitive tasks and express multifaceted ideas in English during cooperative learning activities?

In cooperative learning, I apply various methods according to how students are matched in terms of their abilities. I conduct cognitive complexity evaluations by observing how well they can handle complex tasks. For instance, I give an assignment where they have to find a current global problem; talk about the different facets of it, present their findings in front of the group, and then later share it with the whole class. They are given the task of judging how they can use and mix data, think complex thoughts, and state multifaceted points. Also, I have developed rubrics that assess critical thinking and problem-solving skills directly making it easier to give them extensive feedback as they learn.

Theme 10: Confidence

12. Have you observed any shifts in students' confidence when speaking English as a result of cooperative learning? How do they manifest?

Yes, I have definitely seen a lot of change in kid's confidence that comes out of cooperative learning. For example, we have seen significant development in those students who were initially lacking the etiquette of speaking in a classroom. One student who used to sit out of

discussions started giving inputs in group discussions. This change was more pronounced during a group debate activity where students were required to defend opposing arguments. The validation of peers and the supportive group atmosphere made them incredibly comfortable. They began to volunteer to lead conversations or share their opinion more actively.

Theme 11: Teacher's Support and Facilitation

13. How do you tailor your support to students during cooperative learning to enhance their speaking skills?

Enhancing students speaking abilities during group work I start by differentiating instruction with multiple resources and activities to meet students at their individual levels. For instance, I tier my speaking activities so that more advanced students are having discussions on higher-level topics while the beginners might just be saying dialogues. In this model, all students can be held accountable and have opportunities to share their thinking. Also, I give constant formative feedback based on whether the students are moving toward mastery of the lesson (goal). For example, I give suggestions on pronunciation or fluency after group work or presentation. I have also structured one-to-one or small group meetings aimed at individual needs (for instance pronunciation drills, and more grammar practice) where I provide them with some sort of differentiated instruction based on their capacity levels and assessment from peers.

14. What strategies do you employ to facilitate effective group work and ensure balanced participation in speaking tasks?

In order to encourage students and ensure they participate equally in group work, I use a combination of methods designed to engage the entire class. So for example, I follow some of

the structured roles within groups. They each have a role to play (speaker, note-taker, or timekeeper) so that every student has a unique purpose and opportunity. This helps make sure one or two students aren't taking over the conversation and encourages all of the quieter participants to add their points too.

Another approach is to change the group members. Constantly switching around groups in the subject gives students opportunities to interact with others so no one sticks to a particular pattern of speech or mode of thought. Also, I use group presentations where each student must present a portion of the project. This not only ensures a balanced participation but also helps students gain confidence in speaking publicly.

For fun, I plan debates or role-playing games. A debate is one such means, where students are armed with contradicting perspectives on a subject and have to argue for their side so there is speaking happening and it balances the act. This creates a dynamic and engaging atmosphere, inciting students to participate actively.

15. In what ways do you provide feedback to students during cooperative learning sessions to help them improve their speaking skills?

I use different methods such as formative assessment and continual feedback. To help judge different aspects of their speaking, I sometimes use a checklist, I have used this method during cooperative learning sessions. For this, I move to a quick meeting with each student or group, where prompt and precise individual feedback (based on that checklist) is provided.

I also do peer feedback sessions where students are asked to give and receive critiques from their peers. This does two things for them; not only helps them improve listening and speaking skills but also nurtures Group Learning. I also give students opportunities to self-assess their speaking performance by having them reflect & set goals for higher-quality

performances. Reflection is important for them to become aware of what they do well and areas that need improving.

Additional General and Reflection Questions:

16. How do you think cooperative learning compares to traditional teaching methods in improving students' English speaking skills?

Based on my experience, cooperative learning is a superior teaching model when trying to develop students' English-speaking capabilities as compared to the traditional methods. This often means more teacher-centered traditional approaches where students mostly listen to lectures and do individual practice exercises. This can restrict the interaction for tangible practice and instant feedback.

Conversely, cooperative learning is based on activity and engagement in working with your peers. I use methods such as group discussion and role-playing, where students work together to solve problems or come up with dialogues. This sort of interactive approach motivates the pupils to talk in a less formal manner since they practice speaking styles. It boosts their confidence and peer feedback helps with their vocabulary and pronunciation.

17. Could you describe any specific instances where cooperative learning led to noticeable improvements in students' speaking abilities?

One particular occasion where cooperation in learning language substantially increased students' speaking ability was a group play we did before summer break. The class was divided into groups and each group had to produce a skit on different themes. They were then required to write dialogues, practice these, and enact their plays in front of the entire class.

There was this one group that was struggling with their grammar and dialogues. After weeks of practice and group discussions with other groups, they managed to not only write a good play but also improve their confidence, fluency, and pronunciation. Other groups helped them in developing better vocabulary. This experience showed that collaboration across peers to work through a language barrier is particularly powerful for students whose primary language is Urdu.

Interview Transcript Teacher B

Name of School: Unique School System	**Date: 26-08-2024**
Class: 8	**Subject: English**
Interviewer: Javeria Rana	**Subject Teacher name: Teacher B.** **(Young Teacher) HF**

Background Questions

Question 1: Can you please describe your background and experience in teaching ESL, particularly for 8th-grade students?

It was around 3 years ago that I started teaching ESL. I have a Bachelor's in English Literature, and I have done some professional development workshops and attended webinars on how to teach ESL middle school students.

Question 2: How long have you been teaching at this school?

I joined Unique School System in Kasur as a middle school teacher but got transferred here two years ago when I moved to Lahore with my parents. In a short period of time, I have built great relationships with students and staff alike.

Main Questions

Theme 1: Engagement and Participation

1. How do you observe student engagement and participation during spoken English cooperative learning activities in your class?

I gauge student engagement by looking at their level of interaction and participation in cooperative activities. I pay attention to how often students contribute to discussions, how

they respond to each other, and whether they're staying focused on the task. I also use quick feedback sessions where students can share their thoughts on the activity, which helps me assess their engagement levels.

Theme 2: Motivation

2. In what ways do you think cooperative learning affects students' motivation to speak in English?

Cooperative learning motivates learners as it allows practice with the language through interactive ways. One of the benefits of this kind of practice is that students tend to take more risks in their language use when they are working with a partner or in small groups, inviting greater confidence in speaking. Active contribution from the shared responsibility in these activities often inspires students to be more involved and maintain motivation levels while they see how their direct input is linked directly with the success of their group. Children have more chances to practice when working in teams and can get quick feedback and help from peers. However, there are also some problems of uneven participation; for example, forcing a discussion could lead to more vocal students taking over the whole discussion and making those who tend not to speak up feel uncomfortable. So here I play a role by keeping it balanced.

Theme 3: Speaking Skill Development: Language Accuracy, Fluency, Pronunciation, Intonation, and Linguistic Complexity

3. Do you see any improvements in students' language accuracy during cooperative learning activities?

I believe there are increased levels of linguistic accuracy in these group scenarios, voluntarily or otherwise. The students benefit from the collaborative process by getting feedback, allowing them to identify errors and practice correct language use. However, these

improvements may be more effective for some in the context of group dynamics and it also depends on how structured the activities are.

4. In what ways do you observe growth in students' oral fluency in English as a result of cooperative learning sessions?

I see growth in oral fluency among my students. Daily use in front of peers can help develop a habit of getting more comfortable with speaking English like you would normally converse. Their confidence and fluency are frequently enhanced with these experiences. But the improvement potentials might be different in nature due to student behaviors and it also depends on the structure of the activities.

5. How has cooperative learning impacted students' pronunciation when speaking English?

It has positively impacted my students. Cooperative learning has improved the pronunciation of my students. This system of peer feedback enables students to recognise and fix pronunciation errors on the spot.

Theme 4: Vocabulary Usage

6. Have you noticed changes in students' vocabulary usage as a result of cooperative learning activities in their spoken English lessons? Could you provide examples?

Yes, I see considerable change and improvement in the vocabulary of my students as a result of cooperative learning. The best thing about group activities is the words and expressions that students adopt from their friends. In one of the recent debate exercises, for example, we began to see students use jargon around things related to technology to build their argument.

That was a positive sign in terms of progression. However, vocabulary growth specifics can vary by activity and all group members being active.

Theme 5: Social Interaction and Peer Support

7. How do you perceive the role of peer support in enhancing students' speaking skills during cooperative learning sessions?

What I think, peer support helps students a lot in improving their speaking skills of the student. They sometimes talk easier in a group setting or voice their opinion in English more confidently as opposed to talking straight on with the teacher, so it gives them more participation and practice. As an example, our role-play shows that students feel willing to experiment with different sentence structures and speech patterns when they are surrounded by others of similar ability. Regardless, it is crucial that the support provided in these scenarios is helpful and not just superficial.

Theme 6: Group Dynamics and Collaboration

8. How do group dynamics influence students' language learning outcomes in cooperative speaking tasks?

I think group dynamics are a huge variable in language performance. The good part — encouraging student behavior and involvement, reinforces better language practice and learning. In practice, when students communicate directly with each other and assist one another through the group discussion task it often results in the development of speaking skills. But at the same time, we have all seen a group that can be taken over either by dominant personalities or those not willing to cooperate with others can negatively affect the learning process. In my class mostly it has impacted my students positively.

Theme 7: Critical Thinking Development

9. Can you share how cooperative learning activities have influenced students' ability to think critically when expressing their ideas in English?

Sometimes some groups require more structure and guidance. As in group brainstorming, students also actually learn to question what is said by each other and think deeply before they reply. In a collaborative writing task, for example, students chat and comment on the parts that their peers have contributed which makes them think critically about what they are coming up with and helps them develop their critical thinking and expression in English.

Theme 8: Overcoming Challenges and Barriers

10. What challenges do students typically face in spoken English competency during cooperative learning, and how do they overcome these barriers when speaking English?

The most difficult part for students is how to improve pronunciation and fluency especially when doing cooperative learning activities. These problems are magnified in group settings where students may not get the individualized support they need. To combat this, I do intensive pronunciation exercises and often give one-on-one feedback to the students. Peer corrections are helpful, but it is important to make sure the corrections made by the peers are correct to avoid reinforcing incorrect pronunciation. Another problem is that often students do not have enough vocabulary or know the right words to express what they want to say. Here peers often help each other and I provide them the right vocabulary.

Theme 9: Cognitive Complexity

11. How do you evaluate students' ability to handle complex cognitive tasks and express multifaceted ideas in English during cooperative learning activities?

Tasks challenging higher-order thinking skills for students are used to assess their cognitive abilities. My classroom includes role play, case studies that students need to evaluate

complex problems and find solutions for them within a group. For example, during a role-play exercise where the theme is about conducting business negotiation with others — how to take care of interests from various angles and make deals. I grade them on how clearly they can communicate their thoughts, and why they did? What the decisions or reasons were that led each one to these conclusions? And also by peer interaction. I also peer reports that enable me to see how students perceive the cognitive contributions of other learners.

Theme 10: Confidence

12. Have you observed any shifts in students' confidence when speaking English as a result of cooperative learning? How do they manifest?

Student confidence, as displayed through different cooperative learning activities is a lot more visible to me. Once I gave them a group presentation task that involved students making and presenting a PowerPoint on their chosen topic. I noticed that my students were more confident in speaking English after that. For example, I observed a few timid students who sometimes found it challenging to articulate their thoughts in front of the class became group leaders and later performed better. This transformation was evident when they began speaking more clearly and with greater enthusiasm. Their peers' encouragement and the opportunity to practice in a less intimidating setting played a crucial role in this shift.

Theme 11: Teacher's Support and Facilitation

13. How do you tailor your support to students during cooperative learning to enhance their speaking skills?

In my cooperative learning sessions, I focus on creating a supportive environment by implementing peer mentoring and providing structured feedback. One strategy I use is pairing students with varying skill levels, where more proficient students mentor their peers. This not

only helps less confident students practice speaking in a less intimidating setting but also reinforces the mentors' own language skills. I also incorporate scaffolded support by providing sentence starters and vocabulary lists tailored to the topic of the discussion. This helps students structure their contributions and build their confidence in using new language. During and after activities, I offer individualized feedback and hold brief check-in meetings with students to discuss their progress, address their concerns, and set goals for improvement.

14. What strategies do you employ to facilitate effective group work and ensure balanced participation in speaking tasks?

I employ a variety of ways in which to create successful group work and clear language tasks. I use jigsaw activities where groups are assigned roles to research and present different components of the topic area. This guarantees that every student is responsible for something and has to take part in the collective work. Then, groups synthesize their research and pool together information so that all students can combine the findings of peers and share with the class for wide knowledge. I also employ round-robin discussions where every student gets a chance to speak on their turn. This way every student has the opportunity to express themselves and speak English. · Some examples are playing games such as “Two Truths and a Lie” among other interactive works. Story Chain is another fun game that I play with the students, where two or more people continue to add sentences to each story during every turn. By having them engage in such activities, not only is participation being balanced but learning becomes fun for the students and less intimidating. I also use peer evaluation for talking and participation. This in turn makes the students more aware of their own contributions, progress, and mistakes.

15. In what ways do you provide feedback to students during cooperative learning sessions to help them improve their speaking skills?

I provide immediate direct oral feedback during cooperative activities to help them develop speaking skills. Throughout the group's work, I walk around and make corrections on the spot. More importantly, this real-time feedback means students can learn, correct, and adjust quickly. I do weekly feedback journals, so they write about the speaking experience and I respond in writing. The journals record their progress and also provide a place for specific, personalized feedback. Furthermore, I facilitate group feedback-sharing sessions where students collectively discuss their performances as well getting collective peer and coach feedback. They can gain so much from each other in a group setting.

Additional General and Reflection Questions:

16. How do you think cooperative learning compares to traditional teaching methods in improving students' English speaking skills?

Cooperative learning is more effective than conventional methods in improving students' English speaking ability because it creates a context for class work to be lively, and interesting. In traditional teaching, the focus is too much on rote learning and a limited amount of speaking. I have seen many schools limited to what can best be referred to as only "structured interactions," restricting the amount of practice and learning experiences for students.

In the case of cooperative learning, students continuously interact with their peers through group presentations and peer review sessions. I feel that this non-stop interaction is very useful for the students as it makes them better at speaking English. One project, for instance recently had student actors performing skits. This not only helped with their fluency, but it added some fun to the learning process. Through cooperative learning and speaking practice, students will be able to simulate the skills of speaking in a variety of contexts, something drastically missing from traditional methods.

17. Could you describe any specific instances where cooperative learning led to noticeable improvements in students' speaking abilities?

One memorable moment in my teaching experience was around a 'debate club' activity where students were put into teams to debate across different topics. However, after taking a few classes one set of students who were very reluctant to speak English made the transition. During the debates, students were challenged to back up their arguments with evidence and express themselves clearly. By working together they got more confidence to speak in public and started using complex vocabulary as well as different kinds of sentences. Their unparalleled access to practice their English with others allowed them to sharpen up on some lingo. I found this especially beneficial for my students as the interactive and non-threatening environment allowed them to gradually acquire more fluent use of English and the sense of competition made them forget their fear of spoken English.

Interview Transcript Teacher C

Name of School: Unique School System	**Date: 27-08-2024**
Class: 8	**Subject: English**
Interviewer: Javeria Rana	**Subject Teacher name: Teacher C. (Mid-Career Teacher) NKhan**

Background Questions

Question 1: Can you please describe your background and experience in teaching ESL, particularly for 8th-grade students?

I have been an ESL teacher for 15+ years and for the past 10 years working with 8th graders. I have a Master's in Applied Linguistics and certification in communicative language teaching. In my career, I have worked in 4 schools. I mix traditional and more modern methods in my method of teaching, adjusting as necessary to ensure students learn the material.

Question 2: How long have you been teaching at this school?

I have been working in this school for 8 years. I have seen a lot of changes in the syllabus and teaching methodologies. Eight years working here has definitely helped me to know the whole system here.

Main Questions

Theme 1: Engagement and Participation

1. How do you observe student engagement and participation during spoken English cooperative learning activities in your class?

I take notice and observe my students when they engage in role plays and group dialogues. I look for eye contact, signs of active listening, and genuine engagement. Participation is measured in the variety of interactions each student has and whether or not they help peers learn. I observe and assess them by using informal benchmarks.

Theme 2: Motivation

2. In what ways do you think cooperative learning affects students' motivation to speak in English?

Through cooperative learning, there is an increase in students´ motivation to speak English, since it allows them to use the language frequently and develop their skills through real-life contexts. The setting of the group is useful because they are sharing each other's speaking experience and can see some direct benefits just by getting feedback from their peers, and participating together. This hands-on use of language, along with positive praise from peers, really encourages students to participate at a higher level and with more enthusiasm. Cooperative Learning enhances students' motivation to speak in English because it provides a lot of practice and support for learning. Peer interactions will naturally motivate them. However, it is good to keep in mind that other students may have less motivation if the group dynamics are not worked out properly and they might think their input does not matter.

Theme 3: Speaking Skill Development: Language Accuracy, Fluency, Pronunciation, Intonation, and Linguistic Complexity

3. Do you see any improvements in students' language accuracy during cooperative learning activities?

I see a lot of improvement in students' language accuracy due to cooperative learning activities, but it’s not always consistent. While the group setting encourages peer correction and support, there are instances where the accuracy of language use might not improve

significantly if the group lacks focus or if peer feedback is not effectively managed. Teachers must monitor and guide the feedback process to maximize accuracy gains. But overall I see a lot of progress. It is when they collaborate that not only do they have their mistakes corrected but learn from having those corrections made. This provides them with enough encouragement and they end up learning basic grammar structures and vocabulary which could be covered.

4. In what ways do you observe growth in students' oral fluency in English as a result of cooperative learning sessions?

I see growth in oral fluency among my students. Daily use in front of peers can help develop a habit of getting more comfortable with speaking English like you would normally converse. Their confidence and fluency are frequently enhanced with these experiences. But the improvement potentials might be different in nature due to student behaviors and it also depends on the structure of the activities.

5. How has cooperative learning impacted students' pronunciation when speaking English?

I observe some positive impacts of cooperative learning on students' pronunciation. Students benefit from practicing pronunciation with their peers and receiving immediate feedback, which can lead to noticeable improvements. However, there are instances where incorrect peer corrections might lead to persistent pronunciation errors. Therefore, while cooperative learning is beneficial, it is important to supplement it with teacher-led pronunciation guidance to correct any inaccuracies.

Theme 4: Vocabulary Usage

6. Have you noticed changes in students' vocabulary usage as a result of cooperative learning activities in their spoken English lessons? Could you provide examples?

I see some changes in students' vocabulary usage due to cooperative learning activities. While students do learn new words from each other, the improvement might not always be significant. For example, during a role-playing activity, students started using more descriptive words related to their characters, but the depth of vocabulary usage sometimes remained basic. It is important for teachers to introduce and reinforce new vocabulary explicitly to complement the benefits of cooperative learning.

Theme 5: Social Interaction and Peer Support

7. How do you perceive the role of peer support in enhancing students' speaking skills during cooperative learning sessions?

Peer support, I think helps more for the spoken part. It is also good that kids help one another by teaching new words and correcting an accent. For instance, when students are discussing any topic in class they teach each other new words and I always encourage them. Peer learning happens with peer support.

Theme 6: Group Dynamics and Collaboration

8. How do group dynamics influence students' language learning outcomes in cooperative speaking tasks?

Group dynamics significantly influence language learning outcomes in cooperative speaking tasks. Effective group dynamics can lead to more effective language practice and better outcomes. For instance, groups with strong collaboration and good interpersonal relationships often produce more fluent and accurate language use. However, when dynamics are poor, such as when students are disengaged or hesitant to participate, it can impede their learning progress and affect the quality of the speaking tasks.

Theme 7: Critical Thinking Development

9. Can you share how cooperative learning activities have influenced students' ability to think critically when expressing their ideas in English?

Cooperative learning has had a mixed impact on students' critical thinking skills. While some students thrive in environments where they need to discuss and defend their ideas, others may struggle to engage deeply with critical thinking tasks. For example, in group discussions, students often benefit from hearing diverse perspectives and developing their arguments, but not all students consistently apply critical thinking. I provide my students with structured guidance to ensure that cooperative activities effectively promote critical thinking.

Theme 8: Overcoming Challenges and Barriers

10. What challenges do students typically face in spoken English competency during cooperative learning, and how do they overcome these barriers when speaking English?

One common problem is different proficiency levels among a group. In this situation, students who are better at English have more chances to do what they want to say and do not let others speak. To help with this, I tactically group students making sure that the weaker speakers have stronger partners. I also create differentiated tasks sometimes meaning that giving tasks according to their abilities to create a more equitable learning experience.

Theme 9: Cognitive Complexity

11. How do you evaluate students' ability to handle complex cognitive tasks and express multifaceted ideas in English during cooperative learning activities?

I assess cognitive complexity by asking students to debate or solve problem tasks. A more specific example is that I organise debates and students have to argue –for or against. It helps me see whether they have the capacity to think about complex concepts and communicate them. I also do more brainstorming idea mapping and simultaneous collaborative

hypothesizing to see how students arrange pieces of a topic. Observing their participation and analyzing their contributions is how I measure their cognitive capacity and then provide them with targeted support wherever it is necessary.

Theme 10: Confidence

12. Have you observed any shifts in students' confidence when speaking English as a result of cooperative learning? How do they manifest?

It has definitely helped my students. Cooperative learning has made them much more vocal and confident in class. We do role-play or any similar activity at least once a week where students have to prepare points in groups and then speak or act with dialogues. Just this week we did a role-play activity where students had to simulate a press conference on a social issue. One of my students was really anxious and hesitant about speaking up and playing his role but when he saw others doing it he felt so much better and by the end of the activity he not only did his part but also contributed enthusiastically in the Q&A session of the press conference. Children always feel more confident when they work together and see their peers doing the same things.

Theme 11: Teacher's Support and Facilitation

13. How do you tailor your support to students during cooperative learning to enhance their speaking skills?

I work with students in a cooperative learning context and use many methods such as the targeted instruction and collaborative feedback that I offer. I begin by establishing the goals for each task and offering students clear guidelines for performance expectations. I highlight the characteristics of effective arguments and rebuttals in group debates to focus their attention on what is essential for making your case for persuasive speaking. Also, I conduct a role-play exercise where they simulate scenarios like preparation for conducting meetings and attending interviews. This pragmatic approach allows them to learn English in their own

environment and put what they have learned into practice. Following these activities, I moderate peer review sessions where students deliver feedback to one another based on a set of guidelines. Students engage in this reflective process of collaboration and feedback and it helps them to improve their performance.

14. What strategies do you employ to facilitate effective group work and ensure balanced participation in speaking tasks?

To ensure effective group work and balanced participation, I use several strategies, and one of the strategies is **group contracts**, where students collectively agree on expectations and responsibilities for their group work. This promotes a sense of ownership and accountability, as each member is aware of their role and the group's goals.

I also use **time-limited activities**, such as timed debates or impromptu speeches, where students have a set amount of time to prepare and present their ideas. This keeps the activity lively and ensures that all students have a chance to speak within the allotted time. To encourage balanced participation, I implement **talking sticks** or similar tools, where only the student holding the stick can speak. This ensures that everyone has an equal chance to contribute without interruptions.

For a fun twist, I organise **role-reversal activities**, where students take on roles opposite to their usual ones. For example, students might play the role of a teacher or an expert on a topic. This not only engages students but also encourages them to think critically and speak more confidently in different scenarios.

15. In what ways do you provide feedback to students during cooperative learning sessions to help them improve their speaking skills?

The strategies for providing feedback vary depending on the type of learners I am working with. For example, one beneficial activity I do is audio recordings of students and having them listen to their own speaking tasks for analysis. This provides an opportunity for students to listen back on their performance and think of ways they could have done it better.

Aside from recordings, I also have many rubrics for the speaking activities to allow students to know what exactly they are being assessed on. For an interactive strategy, I play feedback games, like error hunt to have them search for and correct speaking mistakes in a fun way.

Additional General and Reflection Questions:

16. How do you think cooperative learning compares to traditional teaching methods in improving students' English speaking skills?

Though I understand that traditional teaching methods have their strengths, cooperative learning always seems more vibrant and productive when it comes to practicing the speaking skills of students. Traditional methods can be good at teaching individual assignments and even teacher led instruction if no long-winded grammar explanations are involved, but students might still end up with limited speaking practice.

In my class, I employ cooperative learning strategies such as debates and group discussions. This type of activity inspires the use of the English language more actively and creatively. It seems they engage better and are more motivated when collaborating with their peers in activities that involve having to communicate. Students who prepare and deliver group presentations are working together to both speak better and think more critically about ideas.

17. Could you describe any specific instances where cooperative learning led to noticeable improvements in students' speaking abilities?

I recall a particularly effective cooperative learning strategy involving ‘storytelling circles’ where students worked in small groups to create and narrate their own stories. Many of my students were hesitant, shy, or not that confident with speaking in English. But when we continued this practice over several weeks, they began to open up and all of them showed considerable progress. The group’s supportive atmosphere allowed them to practice speaking in a low-pressure setting. All peers provided each other with constructive feedback, and gradually, all of them gained confidence and saw a consistent improvement in their speaking abilities.

Interview Transcript Teacher D

Name of School: Unique School System	**Date: 27-08-2024**
Class: 8	**Subject: English**
Interviewer: Javeria Rana	**Subject Teacher name: Teacher D. (New Teacher) AR**

Background Questions

Question 1: Can you please describe your background and experience in teaching ESL, particularly for 8th-grade students?

I started teaching as an ESL teacher about four years ago. I was teaching grades 3 through 8 for two years in a private school. Before that, I graduated with a Bachelors in English Literature and received a diploma in Education. Even though I began with the younger grades, I have been working with 8th graders for the past two years. I still need to develop my techniques; however, so far, I have found this age group to be both challenging and appealing when it comes to improving their speaking activities.

Question 2: How long have you been teaching at this school?

Approximately two years ago, I took a start at this school. Although I still think of myself as a new teacher, I managed to adapt to this school. Such a smooth transition was mainly due to the highly supportive administration and advice from colleagues.

Main Questions

Theme 1: Engagement and Participation

1. How do you observe student engagement and participation during spoken English cooperative learning activities in your class?

I monitor engagement by taking notes on how they respond to prompts and how much effort they put into our collaborative tasks. I also observe how students work within the groups—students who are engaged will often take on leadership roles or show they are eager to help others. Participation is evaluated based on the quality of their interactions and how well they contribute and benefit from the group work.

Theme 2: Motivation

2. In what ways do you think cooperative learning affects students' motivation to speak in English?

I believe that cooperative learning has a positive effect on motivation because it integrates language practice into engaging, goal-oriented activities. Students are often more motivated to speak when they realize their dominion of English makes a significant input to their group's success. So I can see collaborative tasks, such as group projects or discussions… create a context where democracy and teamwork prevail, make students think that they "must" and want to participate and must use English to do so. Overall, I believe that participation and the use of English are more motivating within a cooperative setting, where language is used for a purpose and students feel accountable to their peers. However, I have noticed that in some cases, while the teacher's role is important in monitoring and evaluation, there is nothing more I can do to manage to engage a disengaged student and some tasks get too unstructured for some of the students to perform and be motivated, so they get frustrated.

Theme 3: Speaking Skill Development: Language Accuracy, Fluency, Pronunciation, Intonation, and Linguistic Complexity

3. Do you see any improvements in students' language accuracy during cooperative learning activities?

I moderately agree that cooperative learning activities contribute to improvements in language accuracy. The peer interactions during these activities can lead to better understanding and correction of language errors. However, the extent of improvement may vary based on the complexity of tasks and proficiency levels of students. Some students might benefit more than others.

4. In what ways do you observe growth in students' oral fluency in English as a result of cooperative learning sessions?

I moderately agree that cooperative learning sessions aid in developing students' oral fluency. The interaction with peers gives them more speaking practice, which may help them to increase their fluency. Yet, the impact may be low due to the low level of students' engagement or due to activities, which focus on other aspects. It is possible to improve these sessions if the activities are specifically tailored to enhance fluency.

5. How has cooperative learning impacted students' pronunciation when speaking English?

I agree that cooperative learning has helped my students improve their pronunciation to a certain extent. I believe that the more interactional nature of these sessions has had an impact, as learners were able to make an attempt to communicate the words they may not be able to do alone. But to enhance the learning process, teachers have to focus on both providing correct models themselves as well as allowing peer corrections.

Theme 4: Vocabulary Usage

6. Have you noticed changes in students' vocabulary usage as a result of cooperative learning activities in their spoken English lessons? Could you provide examples?

I agree with the statement that cooperative learning activities resulted in using more vocabulary. The opportunity to be exposed to different language usage is beneficial; for instance, some of my students used a wider range of adjectives and verbs in a storytelling session. But sometimes due to this exposure, they may also rely on vocabulary they are unfamiliar with. At times, these activities may not have a significant effect in the absence of a structured group work form or when no guidance is provided on language usage.

Theme 5: Social Interaction and Peer Support

7. How do you perceive the role of peer support in enhancing students' speaking skills during cooperative learning sessions?

I agree that knowing that peers will provide support can help everyone. For instance, we have had many group presentations by now. Typically, while some learners try to assist their classmates in pronunciation and grammar, others only get help from me. However, their attempts are not particularly helpful, as the teacher has to train pupils in advance. If I don't provide them guidance then all students may not benefit equally. Overall, I believe peer support is very effective.

Theme 6: Group Dynamics and Collaboration

8. How do group dynamics influence students' language learning outcomes in cooperative speaking tasks?

As to groups that seem to lead to better output, I believe that their dynamics play a role. Indeed, I had cases when groups received such poor marks due to constant disputes and uneven work within the group. Then I had a group that worked really well as a team and the output was great. I totally agree that group dynamics influence heavily on the cooperative learning speaking task outcomes.

Theme 7: Critical Thinking Development

9. Can you share how cooperative learning activities have influenced students' ability to think critically when expressing their ideas in English?

I've noticed that group activities actively influence students' critical thinking. This is especially valid in cases when the tasks require analysis and reflection. In group activities where students need to analyze and evaluate several solutions to the problem, they tend to think more critically about their ideas. In my class cooperative learning activities have significantly improved my students' ability to think critically when expressing their ideas in English. By working in groups, they are exposed to diverse perspectives, which challenges them to evaluate and articulate their thoughts more clearly. This collaborative environment encourages deeper analysis and helps them refine their reasoning, which leads to more thoughtful and well-structured communication in English.

Theme 8: Overcoming Challenges and Barriers

10. What challenges do students typically face in spoken English competency during cooperative learning, and how do they overcome these barriers when speaking English?

Students often face difficulties with active participation, especially those who are more introverted or shy. This can result in uneven participation and limit the effectiveness of cooperative learning activities. To solve this problem, I create small, comfortable group settings where every student is encouraged to contribute. I also use ice-breaking activities and structured roles within groups to help all students feel more included and engaged.

Theme 9: Cognitive Complexity

11. How do you evaluate students' ability to handle complex cognitive tasks and express multifaceted ideas in English during cooperative learning activities?

I evaluate students' cognitive complexity by incorporating project-based learning where students must work on diverse tasks over an extended period. One example is a group project, I did with my class that involved researching trends, developing strategies, and presenting

their plan about the reduce-reuse-recycle of plastic bags. This task required students to engage in critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative work. I assess their cognitive abilities by evaluating their research skills, the depth of their analysis, and the clarity of their presentation. Regular checkpoints and reflections also help me monitor their progress and adjust my support as needed.

Theme 10: Confidence

12. Have you observed any shifts in students' confidence when speaking English as a result of cooperative learning? How do they manifest?

In my class students' confidence has improved significantly through cooperative learning. For example, I use a 'language buddy' system where students pair up to practice speaking English. Many students who were very hesitant initially started showing increased confidence as they regularly practiced with their partners. The feedback and encouragement they receive help them to overcome their fear of making mistakes. Their progress is evident in their increased willingness to participate in class discussions and speak up more frequently.

Theme 11: Teacher's Support and Facilitation

13. How do you tailor your support to students during cooperative learning to enhance their speaking skills?

I have found that the most effective method of supporting students is to adapt that support to their specific needs and circumstances. The strategy I rely on most is the use of technology designed to practice target skills and focus on learning through speaking. For example, to correct my student's pronunciation I ask my students to use Apps for pronunciation. We don't have computers in class but we have a language lab with computers so once a week we have a lesson there. I use language learning apps and websites with speaking practice and assign exercises to students outside of class to practice their speech. I offer positive feedback

and create a friendly and welcoming atmosphere in class where students are encouraged to participate in group activities designed to practice their speaking skills. I am always in the class, circulating among groups, and helping them with assignments. To encourage them, I always celebrate their progress and achievements and I organize regular reflection sessions where students can discuss their challenges and successes, which helps them feel supported and motivated to continue improving.

14. What strategies do you employ to facilitate effective group work and ensure balanced participation in speaking tasks?

To facilitate effective group work and ensure balanced participation, I incorporate several interactive and inclusive strategies. One approach I use is **station rotation**, where different group stations focus on various aspects of a speaking task. For instance, one station might involve brainstorming ideas, another could focus on creating a speech outline, and a third on rehearsing the presentation. Students rotate through these stations, ensuring they participate in each stage of the task. I also use **student-led discussions**, where groups are responsible for guiding their discussions on a given topic. This strategy empowers students to take charge of their learning and encourages equal participation as each member must contribute to the discussion. To make activities more engaging, I incorporate **discussion prompts** or **question cards**, which students use to initiate conversation and keep the discussion flowing.

Additionally, I use **team-building exercises**, such as ice-breaker games or collaborative problem-solving tasks, to build rapport among students and foster a cooperative environment. These activities help students feel more comfortable with each other, making them more likely to participate actively.

15. In what ways do you provide feedback to students during cooperative learning sessions to help them improve their speaking skills?

My approach to providing feedback includes **peer review activities**, where students assess each other's speaking performances using a structured rubric. This method encourages students to think critically about their peers' speaking skills and apply similar standards to their performance. I also use **interactive feedback sessions** where students show their work and receive feedback from both their classmates and me. This helps them see their strengths and areas for improvement from multiple perspectives. For specific corrections, I use **highlighted transcripts**, where I provide written feedback on transcripts of their spoken work, marking areas of strength and aspects needing improvement. This method allows students to see precise examples of their speaking errors and learn from them.

Additional General and Reflection Questions:

16. How do you think cooperative learning compares to traditional teaching methods in improving students' English speaking skills?

In my view, cooperative learning has several advantages over traditional teaching methods when it comes to improving students' English speaking skills. Traditional methods can sometimes be quite structured and less flexible, focusing on individual drills and exercises. This can limit students' opportunities to practice speaking in a realistic and interactive context.

Cooperative learning, on the other hand, encourages students to engage in group activities that promote active speaking. For example, I incorporate role-play activities and group discussions in my lessons. These activities allow students to use English in practical situations, which helps them build confidence and improve their fluency. I've noticed that students are more enthusiastic and willing to participate in speaking activities when they work in groups. This collaborative environment often leads to better language acquisition and speaking proficiency compared to traditional methods.

17. Could you describe any specific instances where cooperative learning led to noticeable improvements in students' speaking abilities?

One example of enhanced learning with cooperative groups came from a ‘project-based learning’ unit which included the students working together to research and report on various cultural festivals. Students were put in groups and each group got a different festival to research, learned about the 5 elements of culture for that country then presented their findings to the rest of our class. I saw students who had previously been too shy to speak English, gain confidence and flourish. The group work made them practice speaking consecutively and gain something from each other. In one scenario, a student who had difficulty with pronunciation benefitted from peer correction and some practice opportunities. They had become noticeably more confident and comfortable speaking by the end of their project. This is mostly helpful to my Urdu-speaking students because it gives them an interesting context which helps in improving their English.

Interview Transcript Teacher E

Name of School: Unique School System	**Date: 28-08-2024**
Class: 8	**Subject: English**
Interviewer: Javeria Rana	**Subject Teacher name: Teacher E.** **(Veteran Teacher) M.Q**

Question 1: Can you please describe your background and experience in teaching ESL, particularly for 8th-grade students?

I have been in the field of education for about seven years now, with the last four dedicated to teaching ESL to 8th-grade students. Teaching is my passion. I have a background in general education and later shifted to ESL after realizing the growing demand. I have a Master's degree in Education and a diploma in ELT. My experience has taught me that 8th graders need more structured guidance in language skills, especially when they're preparing for high-stakes exams.

Question 2: How long have you been teaching at this school?

I have been with this school for four years now. My experience here has been enriching, especially because of the collaborative culture among the teachers.

Theme 1: Engagement and Participation

1. How do you observe student engagement and participation during spoken English cooperative learning activities in your class?

I observe them through the level of their interaction/participation and communication between students in cooperative activities like how active the students are and how they interact with one another. So I also assess how well they are collaborating, sharing ideas, or

providing feedback. The most engaged students are typically the ones who contribute to the discussions and make an effort to collaborate in a common direction with others.

Theme 2: Motivation

2. In what ways do you think cooperative learning affects students' motivation to speak in English?

Cooperative learning motivates my students to communicate in English because they feel challenged and supported by their classmates. Students do not fear mistakes in this communal setting, as they correct and cheer for one another. Speaking as a team is also better because you know that the other person(s) are more likely to join in, and not make too many mistakes. It helps them build confidence over time — this makes students speak on an everyday basis.

Theme 3: Speaking Skill Development: Language Accuracy, Fluency, Pronunciation, Intonation, and Linguistic Complexity

3. Do you see any improvements in students' language accuracy during cooperative learning activities?

I generally agree that cooperative learning activities can lead to improvements in language accuracy, though results may vary. Students often gain from the collective knowledge and feedback from their peers. Yet, there can be challenges such as inconsistent correction among peers, which might affect the overall improvement in accuracy. Ensuring effective peer interactions and teacher guidance can help mitigate these challenges.

4. In what ways do you observe growth in students' oral fluency in English as a result of cooperative learning sessions?

Cooperative learning sessions have supported the growth in oral fluency of my students. Students benefit from the opportunity to practice speaking with their peers and receive

immediate feedback. However, there are cases where progress in fluency may be slow or uneven, particularly if the group dynamics are not well-managed or if students are hesitant to participate. I help my students by providing them with clear goals and this guidance helps them to improve oral fluency in a group setting.

5. How has cooperative learning impacted students' pronunciation when speaking English?

Cooperative learning helps with pronunciation improvements, as my students often correct each other and learn through peer interactions. They are quick to correct each other's mistakes and I have guided them to take corrections from peers as a positive thing. So my students do not mind correcting each other and in fact, take pride in it sometimes.

Theme 4: Vocabulary Usage

6. Have you noticed changes in students' vocabulary usage as a result of cooperative learning activities in their spoken English lessons? Could you provide examples?

I believe that cooperative learning can improve students' vocabulary usage. Through peer interactions, students are exposed to and practice using new words. For example, in a collaborative assignment on famous personalities, my students began using more specialized vocabulary related to historical contexts and started telling each other the new words and their meanings without input from my side. However, while there is an observable improvement, the extent can be inconsistent, and I think that the teacher should provide targeted vocabulary exercises alongside cooperative learning activities.

Theme 5: Social Interaction and Peer Support

7. How do you perceive the role of peer support in enhancing students' speaking skills during cooperative learning sessions?

In my opinion, peer support improves students' speaking skills. From my observation, students, who are good at speaking, usually act as mentors for the less confident peers in collaborative projects. For example, they help less experienced students improve their spoken skills by pointing to their mistakes and giving them advice. In addition, during group cooperation, students have the opportunity to learn from their peers and follow their best examples.

Theme 6: Group Dynamics and Collaboration

8. How do group dynamics influence students' language learning outcomes in cooperative speaking tasks?

In my experience, group dynamics are fundamental for the success of any collaborative speaking task. As such, in the case of an effective group, members are expected to support each other and contribute equally to the group's success. For example, I find that in well-organized groups that apply collaborative activity, students often demonstrate better fluency and accuracy. However, in less efficient groups, there is usually one or two students that dominate the group. In such cases, the rest of the group is not fully involved, and the outcomes of a cooperative task are not that effective.

Theme 7: Critical Thinking Development

9. Can you share how cooperative learning activities have influenced students' ability to think critically when expressing their ideas in English?

In my experience, cooperative learning activities often stimulate critical thinking among students, though this effect can vary. Activities such as peer reviews and group debates encourage students to question and refine their ideas. For instance, when students collaborate on analyzing a text, they frequently engage in deeper critical thinking about the content and

their interpretations. However, it is important to ensure that students are given proper guidance to fully benefit from these activities.

Theme 8: Overcoming Challenges and Barriers

10. What challenges do students typically face in spoken English competency during cooperative learning, and how do they overcome these barriers when speaking English?

One significant barrier is the tendency of some students to dominate discussions, which can leave quieter students with fewer opportunities to practice speaking. To counteract this, I establish clear group roles and rotate responsibilities to ensure that all students have a chance to speak. Additionally, I monitor group interactions closely to ensure a balanced contribution from all members, which helps to create a more inclusive environment for everyone.

Theme 9: Cognitive Complexity

11. How do you evaluate students' ability to handle complex cognitive tasks and express multifaceted ideas in English during cooperative learning activities?

I use a combination of collaborative group discussions to assess students' cognitive complexity. For instance, I assign complex case studies related to social issues where students must analyze the problem, propose solutions, and evaluate the implications of their proposals. During group discussions, I observe how students articulate their ideas, challenge each other's perspectives, and build upon their collective understanding. I also use reflective journaling sometimes, where students document their thought processes and insights, allowing me to evaluate their cognitive development over time.

Theme 10: Confidence

12. Have you observed any shifts in students' confidence when speaking English as a result of cooperative learning? How do they manifest?

I have observed a notable shift in students' confidence due to cooperative learning. In one particular instance, students worked in groups to create and perform short skits. A student who was usually very quiet and reserved began to shine in their group, taking on a leadership role and becoming more vocal. This boost in confidence was reflected in their willingness to engage in other classroom activities and volunteer answers. The group setting allowed them to practice speaking in a supportive environment, which greatly enhanced their self-assurance.

Theme 11: Teacher's Support and Facilitation

13. How do you tailor your support to students during cooperative learning to enhance their speaking skills?

To improve the speaking skills of my students, I employ a number of approaches, including individualised feedback and targeted skill development exercises. I start by performing diagnostic tests, designed to determine each student's specific issues with speaking. Then I develop individualised sets of exercises, which can range from strictly-pitched pronunciation practice and listening to speech development exercises — for example, building up the vocabulary of the student. In addition to this, I employ student-driven conferences, where pupils report on the progress they have achieved and set personal goals. This is designed to foster self-assessment and improve student accountability. The cooperative exercises help develop these skills even further, as students practice speaking to each other or role-playing, while I monitor the process and intervene or give advice. My goal is to create an atmosphere where students are unafraid to make mistakes while experimenting with the language and learning from each other. However, sometimes I cannot manage to do what I really want to do due to time constraints but I try my best.

14. What strategies do you employ to facilitate effective group work and ensure balanced participation in speaking tasks?

I feel that students may be more likely to participate in group work if it is based on their personal experience and my adaptation of the ‘mock trial’ strategy works well. First of all, I select the students based on their strengths and weaknesses, and specifically – good speakers and poor speakers pair up. I might also ask confident students to work with less confident ones to get the former to take more responsibility and do some peer support work. I then ask the students to create a small part of a presentation based on one paper of their choice. We have a feedback loop opened, and after each group’s presentation, we discuss their work in class. I also use fishbowl discussions and make the group whose turn it is sit in the middle and talk, while the rest is only watching. I find this way that no student is left out and nobody can hide, so preparation is inevitable.

15. In what ways do you provide feedback to students during cooperative learning sessions to help them improve their speaking skills?

I use a feedback matrix to monitor components of speech such as fluency, vocabulary use, and pronunciation. I use the matrix to give feedback in writing, and I have a written feedback sheet after students present which they can use during their evaluations of presentation. I also do feedback circles so students get better at providing constructive criticism through speaking performances. The peer-to-peer feedback encourages a sense of community as well as allows students to learn from one another. I also give video feedback using Flipgrid— where I record students' speaking and review it with them. It only serves to give us the chance for a full conversation about how well they did, and evidence as to what specifics of their speaking ability are missing. My students love the Flipgrid video feedback but we are not allowed to

use mobiles in class so I often give this feedback from home on their assignments and then the next day we discuss it in class.

Additional General and Reflection Questions:

16. How do you think cooperative learning compares to traditional teaching methods in improving students' English speaking skills?

My experience suggests that cooperative learning may be a better way to improve students' English speaking skills than traditional teaching methods. Traditional methods typically rely more on speaking instruction and less on practice, so students can make slower progress.

In cooperative learning, on the other hand, students are asked to speak frequently in a variety of ways. However, things such as group projects allow them to speak about what they have learned in a more supportive environment. In my experience, students gain a lot of confidence and comfort with speaking when these activities are used frequently. While group-based storytelling practices, for instance, develop their speaking skills aside from the camaraderie and mutual language development support they give to one another.

17. Could you describe any specific instances where cooperative learning led to noticeable improvements in students' speaking abilities?

I do a class activity where students have 'peer teaching' sessions. Students are given topics to teach their classmates using English. An individual and really shy student who had a problem even expressing her words has so much improved.

She got support from her peers through the cooperative learning environment and was able to practice speaking many times in this same process. She improved noticeably in delivering

presentations and the number of words she used. This experience taught me the importance of group study and practice which is one good means to improve English speaking skills.

Interview Transcript Teacher F

Name of School: Unique School System	**Date: 29-08-2024**
Class: 8	**Subject: English**
Interviewer: Javeria Rana	**Subject Teacher name: Teacher F. (Early Career Teacher) AJ**

Question 1: Can you please describe your background and experience in teaching ESL, particularly for 8th-grade students?

I'm new to the ESL world only having begun teaching just two years ago after completing my B.Ed. in 2020 with a focus on English. Since I started working at this school 1 year ago, my grade level has been 8th graders. I have not yet had the opportunity to test many strategies, but look forward to discovering which works well with my students at this level.

Question 2: How long have you been teaching at this school?

This is my first year here. I have taught at only one school before. It is a whole new environment for me, which I am getting used to.

Theme 1: Engagement and Participation

1. How do you observe student engagement and participation during spoken English cooperative learning activities in your class?

I observe that by looking at their ability to take part actively. I ensure that they are speaking up, asking questions, and responding/helping out/referring back to the ideas of others. Participation is monitored by how often they ask questions and how much effort the students put into doing group assignments.

Theme 2: Motivation

2. In what ways do you think cooperative learning affects students' motivation to speak in English?

Cooperative learning can increase student motivation by creating a more inclusive and less threatening environment for speaking practice. If students are working together, they usually feel more relaxed. Students are more motivated in general, they love the social element of working with classmates. My students are always excited about group work.

Theme 3: Speaking Skill Development: Language Accuracy, Fluency, Pronunciation, Intonation, and Linguistic Complexity

3. Do you see any improvements in students' language accuracy during cooperative learning activities?

I admit cooperative learning works to a certain extent for language accuracy. Students get the chance to practice and be corrected in their language with peer support, resulting in visible changes. In my class students often correct each other's mistakes which results in improved accuracy.

4. In what ways do you observe growth in students' oral fluency in English as a result of cooperative learning sessions?

Students' oral fluency has certainly grown for some students through cooperative learning but I have a few students who did not show much progress. I think it matters how complex those tasks are/the work you have them doing and how well they cooperate with each other. In terms of fluency, even if students progress at different rates …fewer barriers to engaged participation will result in more rapid gains.

5. How has cooperative learning impacted students' pronunciation when speaking English?

I see a lot of improvements in students' pronunciation due to cooperative learning, as the peer feedback helps them practice and adjust their pronunciation.

Theme 4: Vocabulary Usage

6. Have you noticed changes in students' vocabulary usage as a result of cooperative learning activities in their spoken English lessons? Could you provide examples?

Some improvements, for example, students began using more topic-related vocabulary during a group discussion on the news. However, the degree of vocabulary used is usually not very deep given that peer-to-peer interaction and activities may be simple.

Theme 5: Social Interaction and Peer Support

7. How do you perceive the role of peer support in enhancing students' speaking skills during cooperative learning sessions?

In my experience, peer support can significantly enhance speaking skills, but it has its limitations. Students who are comfortable with speaking English often assist their peers, which can be motivating and educational. For example, in group activities, students may model correct pronunciation or suggest better ways to phrase sentences.

Theme 6: Group Dynamics and Collaboration

8. How do group dynamics influence students' language learning outcomes in cooperative speaking tasks?

From my own experience I've seen the effect on group dynamics have an impact on language learning achievement. Students have more opportunities to talk in a group setting, which is

good for language practice and learning speaking skills as students mostly encourage their group fellows.

Theme 7: Critical Thinking Development

9. Can you share how cooperative learning activities have influenced students' ability to think critically when expressing their ideas in English?

Cooperative learning has been effective in helping my students learn how to think critically. For instance, when solving problems as a group of students they are asked to look at different solutions and justify their answers. They use their critical skills, and shared teamwork helps them do that well.

Theme 8: Overcoming Challenges and Barriers

10. What challenges do students typically face in spoken English competency during cooperative learning, and how do they overcome these barriers when speaking English?

One of the biggest challenges that we face is when students do not have a rich vocabulary and it affects their ability to articulate themselves properly. During discussions, students may be missing the words and as a result, get frustrated with low participation. I help them by creating word study tasks and promoting new words in student discussions. Before every English lesson or at the start of it I share a vocabulary list of the words I will be using in the lesson.

Theme 9: Cognitive Complexity

11. How do you evaluate students' ability to handle complex cognitive tasks and express multifaceted ideas in English during cooperative learning activities?

To tell you the truth, I am still not experienced in cooperative learning, and also trying to figure out how students do that. I rely mostly on seeing how well they work together and engage in conversation. I am also able to see when students are striving to extend their thinking, and in addition that provides insight into how they might be making meaning of more complex ideas.

Theme 10: Confidence

12. Have you observed any shifts in students' confidence when speaking English as a result of cooperative learning? How do they manifest?

Cooperative learning has helped my students increase their confidence. I remember one in which students had to write a 3-minute speech about a topic. A student who had been timid and reticent to speak up in front of the class moved into a leadership position within their group. Practice was also key to overcoming many of their initial reservations and the collaborative nature of work including peer support was pivotal for them.

Theme 11: Teacher's Support and Facilitation

13. How do you tailor your support to students during cooperative learning to enhance their speaking skills?

My support in cooperative learning is more of management and facilitation. One of my practices is giving students step-by-step instructions and examples for each item. For instance, during group presentations, I provide templates and example outlines to assist students in managing their thoughts efficiently. I also have feedback loops built-in through short mini-lessons where students hear from me and each other right away with constructive suggestions. This allows them to check their strengths and weaknesses as they go.

14. What strategies do you employ to facilitate effective group work and ensure balanced participation in speaking tasks?

There are several strategies that I use to help group work run more effectively and fairly with regard to participation. I have a few different ways that I do this, but one of them is through doing group check-ins where they will each get their own time to meet with me and tell me how things are going. By following this method, every student gets a chance to speak and the task remains engaging. I also play English language learning games with groups, such as “Charades” or “Taboo” so that they have to use the target language in an entertaining and active way. These are fun activities and involve class participation of large number, to enable students to speak freely. I use peer teaching too sometimes.

15. In what ways do you provide feedback to students during cooperative learning sessions to help them improve their speaking skills?

In cooperative learning sessions, I include different feedback strategies that provide support to students in their speaking development. I use instant feedback and sometimes I allow them to correct their own mistake by repeating a sentence. I use feedback workshops where students discuss feedback in small groups. Sometimes I use feedback posters where we display common errors and tips for improvement.

Additional General and Reflection Questions:

16. How do you think cooperative learning compares to traditional teaching methods in improving students' English speaking skills?

Cooperative learning stands as an alternative to common-traditional teaching methods concerning the development of English-speaking skills among students. More often than not,

traditional methods promote individual work and passive learning that can kill conversational practice.

I speak from experience when I say that cooperative learning activities like class debates and group storytelling have proven to be a huge success in my classroom. On the other hand, Skit creation and performance provide a real-world speaking opportunity where students can engage in meaningful spoken practice with feedback from their peers. Not to mention, these types of interactive activities help get students to speak in a less formal and more supportive environment. What I have learned is that they tend to be more willing, to take a risk and try something original in English when other students are involved. On the whole, cooperative learning gives an opportunity to be more interactive and learn better.

17. Could you describe any specific instances where cooperative learning led to noticeable improvements in students' speaking abilities?

A notable instance of cooperative learning leading to improvement was during a ‘role-play’ activity where students acted out various real-life scenarios, such as ordering food at a restaurant, asking for directions from a stranger, or buying stuff at the grocery store. Initially, some students were hesitant to speak due to their limited vocabulary and fear of making mistakes. However, as they worked in groups and practiced these scenarios, their speaking skills improved significantly. They became more comfortable with using English in practical contexts and started making fewer errors.